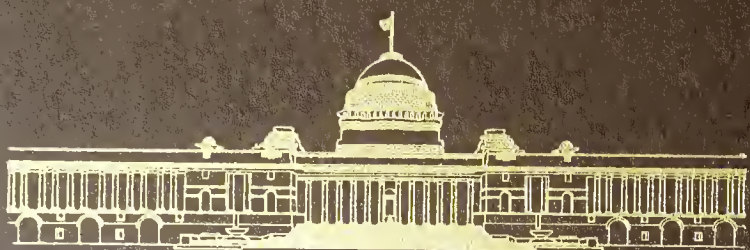


THE
PRESIDENTIAL
RETRREATS
OF INDIA

The presidential retreats, both 19th-century heritage buildings, are the lesser known residences of the President of India. Not far from Shimla and surrounded by over a hundred acres of forest, is the picturesque hill station villa known as The Retreat, Mashobra, once the weekend home of the viceroy. In the Deccan, within peaceful Secunderabad cantonment, stands the Rashtrapati Nilayam, the colonial bungalow that served for over a century as a home of the British resident at the court of the nizam of Hyderabad, the largest of the princely states.

In this volume, the authors trace the history of grand city residences and rural retreats from the time of the construction of Government House, Kolkata (now Raj Bhawan), and the riverside retreat of Barrackpur. They look afresh at the presidential retreats' imposing partner buildings Shimla's Viceregal Lodge (later the Rashtrapati Niwas and then the Indian Institute of Advanced Study) and the Residency, Hyderabad and throw new light on the context of the retreats by analysing the development of hill stations and the evolution of Hyderabad's military cantonments. For the first time, they bring to the public eye, the retreats themselves, their architecture and interiors. Through first-hand accounts, they describe life as it was and as it is lived at the retreats, where presidents have traditionally come both to relax and, more importantly, to meet and make themselves accessible to the people of India.

This is one of a series of volumes documenting different aspects of the rich cultural, social and historical legacy of Rashtrapati Bhavan as a national institution.



RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI

THE
PRESIDENTIAL RETREATS
OF INDIA



THE PRESIDENTIAL RETREATS OF INDIA

Edited by Gillian Wright

Photography by André Jeanpierre Fanthome

Published by Publications Division, Government of India

LEFT: In every season flowers bring colour to the exteriors of the Rashtrapati Nilayam

THE PRESIDENTIAL RETREATS OF INDIA

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A winter view of The Retreat at Mashobra showing the main entrance from the verandah

PREFACE



This volume on the Presidential Retreats is third in the series of the multi-volume documentation project aimed at preserving the legacy of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Besides the Rashtrapati Bhavan being the office-cum-residence of the President of India, there are two presidential retreats, ‘The Retreat’, located in Mashobra near Shimla, and the ‘Rashtrapati Nilayam’, situated in Bolarum, part of the Secunderabad cantonment area. This volume documents the history and tradition connected with these two presidential residences.

The president, as the constitutional head of our vast nation and the commander-in-chief of its armed forces, is an important symbol of the republic and a vital unifying force for a wonderfully diverse society. It helps that cause if the president is periodically seen residing in different parts of the country. The two presidential retreats have served that purpose beautifully.

We hope that this compilation will engage the attention of readers and provide an important source of reference and record.

OMITA PAUL
SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT
SEPTEMBER 2015
RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN
NEW DELHI



FROM THE HUGLI TO THE HIMALAYA

Gillian Wright

Rashtrapati Bhavan, surmounted by its great Buddhist dome, is instantly recognisable as the residence of the President of India. But far from the grandeur of Rajpath and India Gate the president has two other homes that are much less widely known. Built in the 19th century and standing in extensive grounds away from the crowds and congestion of a city, they are called Retreats. In comparison with the Rashtrapati Bhavan these are very modest residences, and neither of them was purpose-built for a president, or for that matter a viceroy or governor-general of British India. Each has a different story to tell and in this volume the authors will unravel these stories through the buildings themselves, through the accounts and memories of those that have lived and worked there and through their documented past.

One of these residences is actually named 'The Retreat'. Crowning a Himalayan ridge at Mashobra not far from Shimla and surrounded by forests of oak, maple and cedar where wood-brown butterflies flutter past tapestries of fern, it is a quintessential hill station cottage constructed of wood and clay. In its garden mixed hunting parties of tiny birds flit through the shrubbery, woodpeckers drum on tree trunks and jays screech their colourful presence. This retreat guards an invaluable natural tract that is a haven of biodiversity.

The president's other retreat, Rashtrapati Nilayam, set in the magnificent boulder-strewn Deccan landscape at Bolarum on the edge of the Secunderabad military cantonment near Hyderabad, is his base in South India. As such it is not so much a place to retreat from the world as to engage with it. Yet this apparently simple bungalow with its curved verandahs can be as peaceful as Mashobra. The armed forces, with their discipline and respect for tradition, have played an important role in preserving India's built heritage. The cantonment of Secunderabad is a fine example of this, and during our research it has been fascinating to discover the Nilayam in the context of a 19th-century landscape that remains fundamentally unaltered.

Strikingly each retreat is one of a pair of historic buildings. Their partner buildings were grand residences in urban centres that were seats of government. Before Independence Rashtrapati Nilayam was the country house of the British resident who lived in the palatial Residency in the heart of the capital of the nizam of Hyderabad, the largest of the princely states. In

LEFT: The south front of Kolkata's Raj Bhavan, formerly Government House, with its dome surmounting a rotunda and its wide verandah, a concession to the Indian climate

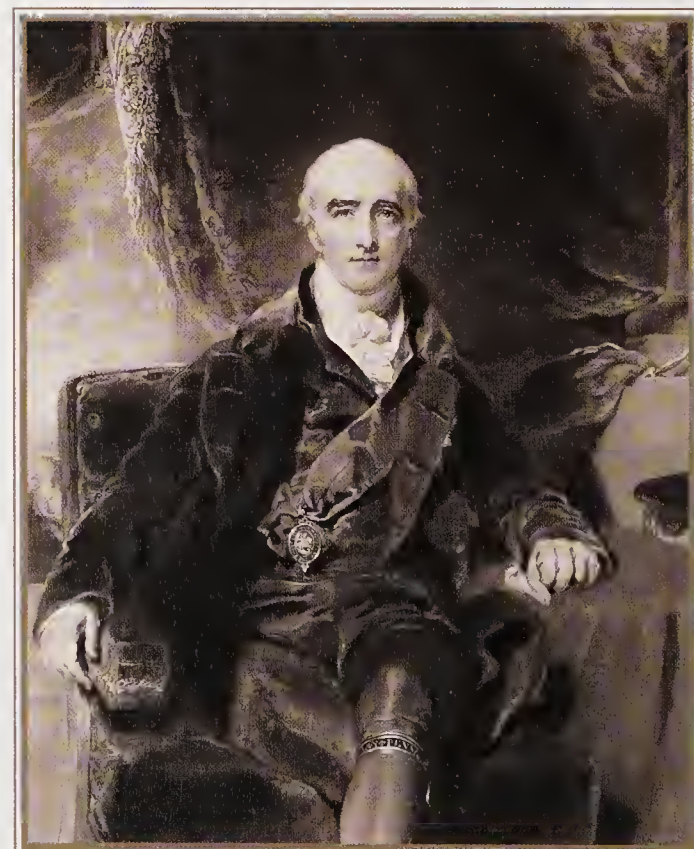
the north, The Retreat at Mashobra became the weekend home of the viceroy, whose weekdays were spent at the imposing and eccentrically baronial Viceregal Lodge at the British summer capital of Shimla, then known as Simla.

The British move to Shimla was itself an elaborate and expensive retreat to the hills from the heat of the plains. As such its Viceregal Lodge and Retreat were themselves umbilically linked to Government House, Kolkata—now West Bengal's Raj Bhavan—that was home to 23 governors-general and viceroys while Kolkata, then known as Calcutta, was the capital of British India. The stories of today's retreats would be incomplete without considering the buildings to which they were linked, buildings historically related to Rashtrapati Bhavan. This chapter is devoted to these other residences, the most enduring example of which was the creation of the governor-general Richard Wellesley.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

When Wellesley sailed up the Hugli to take office in 1798, Kolkata was already becoming known as a city of palaces, and a line of gleaming lime-plastered buildings would have met his eye as he approached the port. His intentions, both territorial and architectural, were from the first imperial. In 1799 his army defeated Tipu Sultan, and his subsidiary treaties, concluded first with the nizam of Hyderabad, secured huge swathes of British influence. In Kolkata he ordered the demolition of his official residence, together with the Council House and some 17 other buildings, to create a site for a new, permanent Government House that was to be the greatest palace of all.¹ It was to stand at the heart of British power between the administrative centre of Writers' Building on Tank Square to the north and the military headquarters of Fort William across the green expanse of what we now call the Maidan to the south; to the west were the growing number of public buildings of Esplanade Row—the Bank of Bengal, the Supreme Court, the Town Hall and the Treasury.

Under the supervision of the architect Captain Charles Wyatt of the Bengal Engineers, the first brick was laid





ABOVE: 'The Town and Port of Calcutta', a lithograph by Charles D'Oyly Chinnery (1781–1845), showing the 'palaces' of Esplanade Row [Source: Victoria Memorial Hall]

LEFT: Richard Wellesley, builder of Government House, Kolkata, and Government House, Barrackpore [Source: Victoria Memorial Hall]



*The south front of Government House, Kolkata, from around a century ago, before it was surrounded by a veil of vegetation
[Source: Victoria Memorial Hall]*

on 5 February 1799 and it was declared complete on 18 January 1803, at a cost of Rs 5,06,326, Rs 2,885 less than estimated. No expense was spared on its furnishing, with Rs 69,000 alone being spent on classical scenes painted on canvas by a local artist and hung across the ceilings of the staterooms.² Only the exquisite chandeliers and some mirrors and marble tables appear to have been second-hand, purchased at the auction of the personal effects of the Frenchman General Claude Martin, a courtier of the nawab vazir of Avadh.³ The spirit behind the new residence is best summed up by Viscount Valentia, one of Wellesley's guests at the first ball held there. Defending his friend's Augustan tastes as appropriate for the land of the Mughals, Valentia wrote, 'I wish India to be ruled from a palace, not a country house, with the ideas of a prince, not with those of a retail dealer of muslins and indigo.'⁴

The Residency at Hyderabad, constructed just a few years later, was another expression of this spirit. However, while the Residency was the brainchild of a man who required

a zenana for his Indian wife, the new Government House stood in a bastion of Britishness, in the European area of a city that was at that time racially divided into a 'White' and 'Black' Town.

Over two centuries later Wellesley's residence has been shorn of most of its imperial furnishings and modern tower blocks increasingly define the skyline where once it stood supreme. In this democratic era it has found a place as a cherished landmark, a heritage building of graceful proportions and of elegant curves and columns. To a large extent it owes these to the building that inspired it, Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, the ancestral home of Viceroy Lord Curzon, built by his great-great grandfather in 1770. Kedleston itself was inspired by the work of the 16th-century Italian Renaissance architect Palladio, and by the villas of ancient Rome. Like Government House, it was built for show but unlike Government House it was designed for an English climate as a family home, with the result that the two buildings are more strikingly different than they are similar.



*An early photograph of the north front of Government House, Kolkata, showing the ceremonial steps, and one of the original gateways
[Source: Victorial Memorial Hall]*

The owners of Kedleston felt the need to construct only two of the four wings of the original plan, and these are of smaller proportions than the main block, which has as its centerpiece one of the most outstanding examples of neoclassical architecture of the period—an enclosed, vaulted marble hall modelled on a Roman atrium. In contrast, all the main elements of the three-storeyed Government House—its four satellite wings and the sweeping arms of corridors linking them to the central block—are of the same height and have a distinctive unity. Adaptations to the Indian climate include colonnades and verandahs and instead of one elaborate marble hall, it has two plainer halls above one another—a banquet hall and a ballroom—both with windows to provide ample ventilation and light. Kedleston’s weathered sandstone also has a very different appearance to the pale ochre Government House that is an example of what craftsmen could achieve using local materials of brick and lime.

Wellesley’s Government House lent itself naturally to ceremony. Viceroys and governors-general used the grand

external staircase of the northern façade to make their formal entries and exits at the beginnings and ends of their terms. Indian princes were received in state by the viceroys in the Throne Room that opened onto the length of the banquet hall, with its floor of grey marble, its Doric pillars, and white marble busts of Roman emperors, that in turn opened onto the grand northern steps. In her unpublished journal, Elisabeth Bruce, the teenage daughter of the 9th Lord Elgin, the viceroy who purchased The Retreat at Mashobra, recorded one such visit on the morning of 9 March 1894:

‘At five minutes to eight . . . the ‘marble hall’ looked huge. There seemed to be mist between one end and the other: beside each white pillar, hiding even the larger-than-life Roman emperors were member after member of the ideal bodyguard; on the west side of the grand steps stood the band dressed in white uniforms and some lines of infantry presenting arms were arrayed near the front entrance to make everything royal and imposing.



The north front of Government House, Kolkata, as is today



All about this hall, as we entered it were chattering sleepy gentlemen . . . with spurs and blue coat. The Throne built in 1877 . . . was waiting surrounded by six kitmagars (sic) with silver staves that possessed imperial heads, and two huge lances at the entrance to the gold carpet, almost too weighty to move and bowed down with tassels, were ready to destroy any intruders. Almost immediately afterwards His Excellency [the Viceroy] in a black coat . . . arrived and took his seat. A minute later the viceregal band played a soft dreamy tune that gave the sort of lazy feeling of opium, I should imagine, as his Highness the Maharaja of Benares, accompanied by three or four inferiors advanced.⁵

The first floor of the building, the floor of the banquet hall and the Throne Room, that till today contains a round, velvet-cushioned seat that is believed to have belonged to Tipu Sultan, was where decisions were taken that affected not just India, but the entire region. The governors-general and viceroy's office, now the office of the Governor of West Bengal was a spacious room in the south-west wing and the sombre council room, maintained today much as it would have been over a century ago, lay down the curving black and white paved corridor to the north-west wing. The most important official guests were accommodated on this floor in the north-east wing in the Prince of Wales suite, where the President of India still stays on his visits to the city.

But for all that Government House was a hive of official, formal and social activity, constructed at great expense. However, it was never expected to be a residence for 12 months of the year. At the end of the 18th century, governors-general were also entitled to Rs 500 a month to rent what was known as a 'garden-house' on the outskirts of the city.



RIGHT: The banquet hall of Raj Bhavan, paved with grey marble, was formerly known as the Marble Hall and was decorated with busts of the ceasars of ancient Rome. ABOVE: The busts have since been placed on the ground floor



GARDEN-HOUSES AND THE BARRACKPUR RETREAT

The fashion for garden-houses flourished as the British became more secure after their victory at the Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757. The well-to-do set about constructing picturesque retreats in southern suburbs like Alipur and on the high, breeze-catching bank of the river at Garden Reach. Among those in Alipur was Belvedere which for a few years in the 1770s was owned by the first governor-general, Warren Hastings, and served as his official country retreat.

Remarkably, the reasons for moving to these garden-houses were similar to those given a century later to justify the exodus from Kolkata to the summer capital of Shimla, and even from the Residency at Hyderabad to the bungalow at Bolarum. In 1786, the traveller and Kolkata resident, Mrs Jemima Kindersley, described the city in her *Letters from the Island of Tenerife, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope and the East Indies*:

‘In the country round the town, at different distances, are a number of very pretty houses which are called garden-houses, belonging to English gentlemen: for Calcutta, besides its being a large town, is not esteemed a healthy spot; so that in the hot season, all those who can are much at these garden-houses, both because it is cooler and more healthy.’⁶

Wellesley too set out in search of such a cooler and healthier spot away from the congestion of the bazaars, the lack of sanitation and the supposedly disease-laden air of the nearby salt marshes, but he did not intend to rent. He instead chose an estate on the banks of the Hugli at Barrackpur, named after the ‘barracks’ of the garrison that had been stationed there since 1775. This riverside property was occupied by the commander-in-chief, but Wellesley argued that this was merely an accident of history and that the estate lay within his gift. It was a gift he proceeded to present to himself, taking control of it on 1 February 1801 with the express purpose of spending the coming ‘Hot Season’ there.⁷

Wellesley planned a palace at Barrackpur only a shade less grand than at Kolkata but turned his immediate attention to creating facilities for recreation that only the countryside could offer. A mere garden would not satisfy him. He wanted an entire park in the English style. While paying scant attention to the 27-acre compound of Government House, he lavished it on the grounds at Barrackpur that he increased to some 350 acres. Under his orders convict labour drained swamps, raised hillocks and dug water bodies. He was careful to leave untouched mature trees, an essential element of an English park, and arranged for a spire to be added to the Baptist chapel at the Dutch settlement of Serampore across the river to give the illusion of an English landscape. To connect this park to Kolkata he had a new highway, the Barrackpur Trunk Road or BTR, constructed. The river too remained an attractive route, and his green and gold barges were often seen making their way upstream.

The BTR still runs as straight as a die from north Kolkata, past jute mills and a thermal power station, to Barrackpur, some 25 kilometres from the gates of Raj Bhavan. After the highway comes to an abrupt halt, a road to the left leads from the bustling bazaar into the leafy cantonment that proudly announces itself to be the oldest and freshest in India. The estate of the governor-general stood next to the senior British army officers’ bungalows that were set along the banks of a sweeping bend in the Hugli. This part of the cantonment has remained almost unchanged since at least 1841, although the present pucca bungalows were, like those on the Barrackpur estate, constructed in the 1860s, replacing earlier thatched ones with deep verandahs.⁸

At one end of this row of bungalows stands Flagstaff House, now the official retreat of the governor of West Bengal and formerly occupied by the private secretary to the viceroy. In its garden, above hosts of butterflies, tower bronze statues of former viceroys banished from various sites in Kolkata after Independence.

Craggy-faced John Lawrence stands between cinnamon and pommelo trees, and a youthful Curzon, who while



ABOVE: The Cenotaph, Barrackpur, built in the form of a Greek temple to commemorate officers who died during the conquest of Java and Mauritius in 1810 and 1811. A statue of George V now perches on its steps

RIGHT: Flagstaff House, Barrackpur, now the riverside retreat of the governor of West Bengal, and formerly the residence of the private secretary to the viceroy





ABOVE: A view by an unknown artist of the riverfront at Barrackpur from an exaggeratedly large Cenotaph towards a distant Government House [Source: Victoria Memorial Hall]

LEFT: The north front of Government House, Barrackpur in 1870, showing the waters of the Motijheel in the foreground [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Library]

in power did all he could to restore and modernise Government House and afterwards wrote a two-volume history of both it and Barrackpur, stares imperiously across the lawn to a cenotaph in the form of an ancient Greek temple. George V is now perched on its steps but there is no mistaking this as the same building, dedicated to the officers who fell at the conquest of Java and Mauritius in 1810 and 1811, that features in an early 19th-century painting of Barrackpur. This depicts an uninterrupted view from the cenotaph along the green banks of the river across a bridge to the governor-general's retreat.⁹

Walls and dense tree cover obscure this view today, but a few minutes' walk from Flagstaff House brings you to what was once the west gate of what are still known as Lat Bagan, the Gardens of the Lord Sahib and, across the old balustraded bridge over the Moti Jheel, a lane leads to a glade where the former residence stands at an angle to the river, facing downstream towards Kolkata.

Now a dilapidated police hospital, this is at its core the substantial house Wellesley constructed for temporary use until his palace was complete, a palace that was never built. His costly wars and architectural projects proved his undoing and he was summarily recalled to London in 1805, leaving India before the arrival of the Board of Control's dispatch railing against the expense of the Barrackpur project at a time when their finances were 'in a state of the utmost embarrassment'. All work at Barrackpur was stopped, although it turned out not for long.

The 1st Earl of Minto, who erected the riverside cenotaph, adored his retreat. 'Barrackpore,' he wrote, 'surpasses all my expectations, in the beauty of the ground, the beauty of the situation and the comfort of its ways, compared to Calcutta.' Minto's successor, the Marquess of Hastings, greatly enlarged the original building, giving it the form visible today. Outside its southern entrance he placed a

Mughal fountain of white marble, one of the items he removed from Agra Fort during his travels in 1814–15 in an act that has since become a byword for state vandalism.¹⁰

For over a century India was governed from here just as it was from Kolkata, Lord Dalhousie even devising a routine whereby he could spend four days a week at Barrackpur and only three in the city. It also remained very much a retreat as it was much smaller than Government House and unequipped for state occasions, consisting only of a basement, occupied by servants and the occasional interloping snake, and a single lofty upper storey. The principal drawing room, ventilated by 13 large doorways in British colonial fashion and now bare but for empty hospital beds, presented a challenge of interior decoration for each new governor-general's wife. In the 1850s, Lady Charlotte Canning, the artist and former lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria, arranged groups of sofas and comfortable chairs covered with cotton chintz cheerfully printed with roses and broad blue vertical stripes on a white ground. Potted plants provided a touch of greenery, while between the doors she hung reminders of home, portraits gifted by the Queen and scenes of the royal residences on the Isle of Wight and in Scotland.¹¹ Similar images still adorn the walls of The Retreat at Mashobra.

The English-style park outside meanwhile offered Charlotte Canning opportunities for that most English of activities—gardening. Charlotte ordered trees to be removed to open up views and added a riverside walk in imitation of the seaside terrace of her home at Hycliffe on the Hampshire coast. However, the Hugli was not the English Channel and the Bengal climate was a constant barrier to the pursuit of Englishness. Admittedly, great expanses of greensward could be closely mown, and 'English' summer-flowering annuals and roses did do well in a Bengal winter. Lord Auckland even enjoyed the novelty of eating home-grown English strawberries¹² but the Barrackpur gardens remained overwhelmingly, gloriously tropical.



ABOVE: The great banyan tree at Barrackpur in 1870, in whose shade many lunches and picnics took place [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Library]

RIGHT: 'Entrance to Barrackpore Park', by Charles D'Oyly Chinnery. Cavalry from the cantonment and European visitors enjoying a ride on elephants from the hathikhana [Source: Victorial Memorial Hall]







The great trees were Indian species such as mango, peepul, tamarind and, of course, banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*), literally 'the Bengal fig'. A great banyan stood near Government House and many parties and Christmas lunches were held underneath its canopy. Charlotte Canning in particular revelled in tropical plants rather than pining for English ones. As she wrote: 'The luxuriant growth in the jungly ground outside, of dazzling green during the rains, is more beautiful than I can describe and I always think of the Palm House at Kew which gives a faint idea of it.'¹³ Among the colourful novelties at Barrackpur in her day was the now ubiquitous bougainvillea, introduced from its native South America. Lady Amherst had similar tastes and was instructed in the mysteries of tropical plants by Nathaniel Wallich of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens, who added hundreds of specimens to Barrackpur.¹⁴

Elephants used when the governor-general was on tour were stabled at the park's *hathikhana* and were a source of endless fascination. A watercolour by the civil servant and enthusiastic amateur artist, Charles D'Oyly, painted around 1802, shows animated spectators on elephant back in ornate howdahs urging on a cheetah racing at full stretch in pursuit of a deer, or possibly a blackbuck.¹⁵ Cheetahs only became extinct in India in the 20th century and were traditionally kept as hunting animals. This one may have been accommodated at another Wellesley legacy that managed to survive—his menagerie. Until its animals became a major part of the Zoological Park in Alipur that opened to the public in 1876, it was home not only to cheetahs but lynxes, tigers, black bears, rhinos, iridescent monal pheasants, flamingoes and even ostriches and a giraffe from Africa.

'Menagerie of Barrackpore', by Charles D'Oyly Chinnery. The menagerie created by Wellesley was one of the chief attractions of the estate [Source: Victoria Memorial Hall]



Although built for recreation, Barrackpur did not remain untouched by tragedy and the political and military upheavals of the times. The Amhersts lost a son to disease at Barrackpur, and had a narrow escape in November 1824 when Indian troops led by Sepoy Bindee Tiwari rebelled against orders to sail for Chittagong and Rangoon and seized control of the cantonment for two days.¹⁶

In 1857, Mangal Pande famously fired the first shot of the Great Revolt there and it is he, rather than any of the *Lat Sahibs*, who is remembered today. Just next to Flagstaff House families stroll in the shady Mangal Pande Park while the great banyan tree next to Government House is popularly believed to be the place where he was hung. Canning was governor-general throughout the Revolt and its brutal suppression. His wife Charlotte died of malaria not long after and he chose to have her buried at a favourite spot of hers near the riverbank below the house. He outlived her by only a few months and a bronze statue of him on horseback now watches over her grave.

The line of riverside parks, like Mangal Pande's, that have been created over the past few decades are in keeping with the spirit of Barrackpur as it was never entirely exclusive. Most of the grounds were open to the public,¹⁷ and when the house was vacant, visitors could use its bungalows. The former military secretary's bungalow, known as Honeymoon Lodge, was hired by generations of young married couples.¹⁸ The bungalow itself is currently in a ruinous condition but its garden is remarkably well kept and in one corner is the marble obelisk marking the

grave of Myall King, the champion racehorse belonging to the military secretary, William Beresford, that won the prestigious Viceroy's Cup at the Kolkata races in 1887, 1888 and 1890.

The untamed natural world is a feature of all Retreats, past and present. From the treetops at Barrackpur came the sound of Bengal's birds—the screeching of parakeets, the throbbing calls of the barbet and the wild cries of the koel. On the ground jackals were so commonplace and their howling so disturbing that one viceroy and his wife made it their after-dinner entertainment to take potshots at them from the verandah with, it has to be said, no success.¹⁹ The jackals though were a minor inconvenience. The only major one was the weather. In the furnace heat of summer, Barrackpur was in reality little if any cooler than Kolkata. There, Government House was cocooned in moistened grass screens throughout the day. At night all the windows and doors were thrown open to let in the southern breeze that lifted up the table cloth on the dining table and blew away the programmes of music being played by the band, while glasses had to be covered to prevent hundreds of insects, attracted by the lights of the chandeliers, from dropping into them. In the monsoon, mildew covered clothes and books and drawing paper had to be kept safe in boxes containing a layer of quicklime. The climate, in short, did not suit the occupants of Government House. They needed a retreat of a different kind, and it was the Marquis of Hastings, who had reshaped the Barrackpur house, who also opened up the possibilities for retreats far beyond Barrackpur.

ABOVE LEFT: A painting of the drawing room at Barrackpur by Charlotte Canning, wife of the Viceroy Lord Canning, showing it complete with portraits gifted by Queen Victoria. [Source: The 7th Earl of Harewood Will Trust and The Harewood House Trust]

LEFT: The tomb of Charlotte Canning at Barrackpur, seemingly guarded by a statue of her husband, Lord Canning

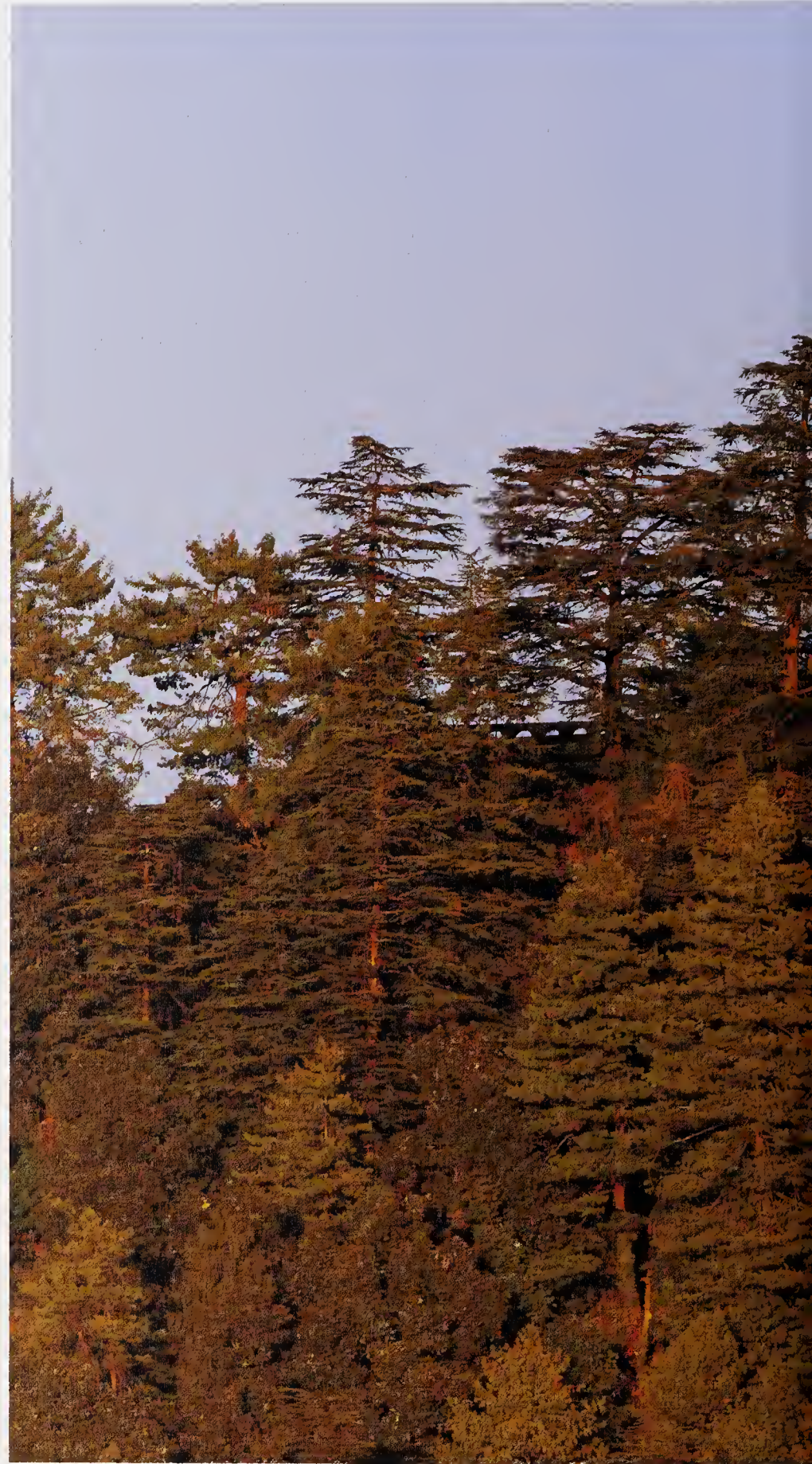
COOLER CLIMES

On 1 November 1814, Hastings' government declared war on the Gurkha kingdom of Nepal that under an able prime minister and general had succeeded in capturing Garhwal, Kumaon and Sirmour. After initial failures, an army led by David Ochterlony and consisting of Company troops and soldiers of the hill states succeeded in defeating the Gurkha army and, in 1816, Nepal formally surrendered its captured territories.

In a meeting of hill chiefs that established British paramountcy in the hills, Ochterlony redrew boundaries and restored or altered feudatory rights. From this moment the path opened for the creation of a new institution—the hill station. Whether Darjeeling in the east, or Shimla, Mussoorie and Nainital in the west, they all owe their existence to the outcome of the Gurkha war. Among the hill states to forfeit territory for its half-hearted support to the British during the conflict was Keonthal, although it was still confirmed as overlord of five smaller states, one of them being Koti.²⁰ Keonthal later gave up territory to establish Shimla while Koti maintained its hold over the Mashobra Ridge and the viceroys staying at The Retreat paid its ruler rent for the lease of the land until Independence.²¹

The next chapter examines the many reasons why the hill station was such a crucial project for the British, and how it reflected their relationship with India and Indians. It was a project that progressed swiftly, with Lord Amherst being the first governor-general to make the arduous journey to Shimla in 1827.²² Yet there was no intention of making a summer capital until, fearing war on the North-West Frontier, the British government broke with tradition to make a commoner, not an aristocrat, Viceroy of India.

John Lawrence, whose statue stands in the garden of Flagstaff House, was a plain-living civil servant who had been instrumental in keeping Punjab on the British side during the Great Revolt of 1857–58. From Shimla he wrote the politely-worded ultimatum to London that resulted in the removal of the Government of British





The Viceregal Lodge had the elevation and grandeur fit for a viceroy as well as extensive wooded grounds

India from Kolkata for much of the year. Lawrence stated that either he should work six months a year in Shimla, or he would return to England the next spring. His health, irrevocably damaged during his previous years in India, was fragile and the Kolkata climate was, for him, 'pestilential'. He could not work there as he could in the hills. He applied the same logic of efficiency to the government generally and pushed his point home by a strategic argument. It was a powerful one for a British establishment that never lost its fear of another 'Mutiny'.

'Here you are,' wrote Lawrence, 'with one foot... in the Punjab, and another in the North-West Provinces. Here you are among a docile population . . . near enough to influence Oude [Avadh]. Around you, in a word, are all the warlike races of India, all those on whose character and power our hold in India, exclusive of our own countrymen, depends . . . so that your Governor-General, if he has any discernment, is well placed to perceive the first signs of danger, and is thus able to apply a remedy.'²³

Lawrence won his case, and although the authorities at that time did not intend it to be a permanent arrangement, a permanent arrangement it became. Shimla became the viceroy's retreat from Kolkata, but it had no equivalent of Barrackpur. That remained the case until Lord Dufferin, one of the many Irish peers to become viceroy, arrived in 1884. A Protestant Ulster landlord of flamboyant tastes, his career as a leading diplomat provided him the income to live in style. Neither he nor his wife found that style at Peterhof, the large Swiss chalet that served as their Shimla residence. The Dufferins made it their mission to complete and occupy within their term a permanent Viceregal Lodge that would in essence be Barrackpur and Government House Kolkata rolled into one. It would have a large wooded estate, its gardens dotted with bungalows, but it would also have state rooms for the balls and formal occasions that had become the norm with the growth of the summer capital. Literally and metaphorically both husband and wife put their hearts into it. Any visitor today will notice the gleaming plump hearts carved into the Burma teak of the doorframes, identical to the ones in the Dufferins' coat of arms.²⁴

Once the Viceregal Lodge was inaugurated in 1888, there was scope for a further retreat, in this case the charming and unpretentious Mashobra Retreat purchased by the 9th Earl of Elgin in 1895. Later in this book, the architect Deepak Gahlowt, who was involved in a major restoration of the former Viceregal Lodge, will examine this pair of historic buildings afresh.

With Shimla as the summer capital, and the viceroys on long tours, Government House became, in Curzon's words, a 'nomad camp'.²⁵ But it was one he in particular, due to his family connection with Kedleston Hall, cherished. During his term he introduced electricity and a lift that is still in use today. Neither did the nomad-life of its residents lessen the pomp and circumstance around them when they were in Kolkata. Lady Minto, the wife of Curzon's successor, the 4th Earl of Minto, was most impressed not by the building and its silk interiors but by the number of staff. Her family of five found they had six European servants and 647 Indian ones²⁶ not counting a phalanx of clerks or the 100 soldiers of the Bodyguard or the band with its German bandmaster.

In the kitchen there was a comparatively modest number of a dozen cooks, seven bakers, one chicken cleaner, eight hot-water bearers, six stewpan cleaners and two tin-men whose job was to maintain the tin-plating on the copper pans. Any bare copper on the pans was thought to harbour disease.²⁷ According to the general practice of the time, the kitchens, with their noise and smells, were in a separate building but few kitchens were so far away from the main residence.

The vicereine Lady Dufferin once remarked, 'The kitchen is somewhere in Calcutta, but not in this house.' It was in fact 200 yards away in Government Place North, necessitating the employment of seven 'dooley coolies' who transported the cooked meals in wooden chests heated by charcoal and with poles at either end. Even today, the Rashtrapati Nilayam in Secunderabad adheres to this architectural convention. The kitchen is separate from the main bungalow and food is carried to the dining room through a tunnel.



The heart of the Dufferins carved into the solid teak interiors of the Viceregal Lodge



Belvedere, the former Kolkata home of the viceroys of India and until recently home of the National Library



NEW POLITICS. A NEW CAPITAL

While the rhythms of domestic life continued undisturbed within Government House, a new spirit was abroad outside its gates, one that would in a few years hasten the demise of the great house's pre-eminence in British India. In his last year as viceroy, Curzon had proposed the partition of Bengal. On 16 October 1906, the partition came into effect creating to the west a province including Bihar and Orissa, and to the east the new province of East Bengal and Assam, with its capital at Dacca. Dividing Bengal united political opinion against the move and against the government. Protests took the form of public meetings, the mass mobilisation of the Swadeshi Movement and targeted killings by those who believed only violence could shake the British.²⁸ Years of government repression wore down many of the protests, but victory was ultimately theirs. When in 1911 King George V visited India, the first reigning British monarch ever to do so, he announced at his Imperial Delhi Durbar, surrounded by the princes of India, the reunification of Bengal. At the same time, the provincial and central governments would be separated and the capital of British India would move to Delhi.

The viceroy, Lord Hardinge, whose first great task in office had been to make preparations for the Durbar, now prepared to relinquish his Kolkata residence. The King had, according to Hardinge's account, wanted him to retain Government House, but Hardinge persuaded him that it should be given to the new governor of Bengal. Instead he kept Barrackpur. After he returned to Britain, it irked him that his successors had given up the riverside retreat for Belvedere, spending Christmas there each year and upstaging the governor at the races and the polo.²⁹

In Belvedere, the viceroys that followed Hardinge chose a building that had undergone many changes since it had belonged to Warren Hastings. Purchased by the East India Company in 1854 as the official residence of the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, its west wing was



ABOVE: A view from the Ridge of the temporary capital's secretariat, with the Yamuna flowing in the distance [Source: Delhi State Archives]

LEFT: A map of the Coronation Durbar of 1911 shows the Rajpur Circuit House as the heart of the imperial encampment [Source: Delhi State Archives]

reconstructed in the 1860s, and its southern façade with a flight of steps reminiscent of Government House was added in the 1870s. The airy galleried ballroom in the east wing was perfect for large parties, while garden parties were accommodated on its sprawling lawns.

When Hardinge left for Delhi he took with him portraits of former governor-generals and viceroys, and the chandeliers that had belonged to Claude Martin. Many other items were dispatched either to Shimla or Delhi, and a large amount of furniture was put up for auction and sold.³⁰ Hardinge's temporary home in Delhi was to be the Circuit House that he knew would be 'inadequate'. For the first time a 'Hot Season' residence, the Viceregal Lodge in Shimla, would be more splendid than the official 'Cold Season' one.

CIRCUIT HOUSE TO VICEREGAL LODGE

Delhi's Circuit House stood near the foot of the Ridge north of Civil Lines and not far from the village of Rajpur due to which it was commonly known as the Rajpur Circuit House. During the siege and capture of the city in 1858, the site had been a part of the British encampment, whereas at the time of all three Imperial Delhi Durbars in 1877, 1903 and 1911 it had stood in the heart of the imperial camp.³¹ The building itself, a bungalow with simple, Tuscan pillars, was perhaps originally a hunting lodge and was renovated under Lord Curzon's supervision during the 1903 Durbars.³² In June the same year it was handed to the Punjab government as the Delhi residence of the lieutenant-governor of Punjab.³³ At that time Delhi district was part of Punjab province with its capital at Lahore.

This isolated³⁴ residence was surrounded by the barren, stony scrubland of the vacated Durbars camps and its status can be calculated by the fact that its entire permanent staff consisted of a bearer, a sweeper, a mali, a bhisti and two chowkidars. The latter were paid six rupees a month, of which one rupee was deducted every month as a security deposit against pilferage.³⁵ An engineer paid visits to service its electric plant, his main task being to save it

from rusting with disuse, as the lieutenant-governor was only expected to visit for six weeks every winter.³⁶ By the summer of 1904 there were two tennis courts and a croquet lawn,³⁷ and two years later the creation of a new cantonment, within whose limits the Circuit House fell, had put an end to its isolation. The bungalows of cavalry officers now stood on the Circuit House compound's northern boundary.³⁸

However, a sanitary report of December 1910 reveals the Circuit House as inadequate as Hardinge could ever have imagined. The rooms were stuffy, the walls coated with plain whitewash, the kitchen small and dirty, and the bathrooms equipped with dry pattern commodes, the sewage being removed by bullock cart.³⁹ It was spruced up sufficiently for the King and Queen to be able to take shelter there if it rained during the 1911 Durbars, but no major structural changes were made, and neither did the royal couple ever visit it.⁴⁰

The decision to change the capital, however, transformed both the Circuit House and the landscape. A 1,290-square-mile imperial enclave was created comprising Delhi district and a strip of land to the east of the Yamuna. Civil Lines together with 500 acres to the north, including the locality of the Circuit House, was declared a Notified Area and allotted generous government grants.⁴¹ Work swiftly began to turn it into a temporary capital. A secretariat was built across the Ridge on the Alipur Road and linked to the Circuit House by a road that passed the Flagstaff Tower, constructed in 1828 as a signal tower for the first cantonment. This secretariat housed central government offices, including the viceroy's, and the Central Legislative Assembly.

The Circuit House and its grounds became a viceregal estate and by the beginning of May 1912 the PWD had taken it over⁴² and was making extensive changes costing Rs 4,86,395,⁴³ a substantial sum, in order to provide a pattern of rooms and facilities resembling those at Shimla. The most expensive item on the list of improvements was 'sanitary installations',⁴⁴ spelling the end of the daily visit of the bullock cart. The kitchens were improved and

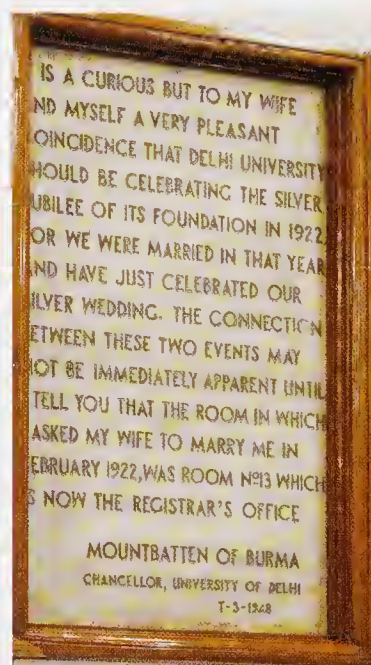


Miss Edwina Ashley and Lord Louis Mountbatten, who became engaged on February 14th at Viceregal Lodge, watching the Police Parade.

ABOVE: The prince of Wales, the future King Edward VIII, in the uniform of Jacob's Horse (35th/36th Cavalry) in the courtyard of his pavilion in the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge, Delhi [Source: MS 62 Broadlands Archive]

ABOVE RIGHT: Lieutenant Lord Louis Mountbatten and his future wife, Edwina Ashley, in the grounds of the Viceregal Lodge, Delhi, shortly after announcing their engagement in February 1922 [Source: MS 62 Broadlands Archive]

RIGHT: The plaque in the room, now the office of the registrar of Delhi University, where Mountbatten proposed to Edwina



MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA
CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
T-3-1928



a large refrigerating chamber was made like the one at Shimla. Attention was also given to a wine cellar and china godown, a laundry, and re-flooring verandahs with Italian marble.

Two days before Christmas that year, Hardinge and his wife reached Delhi by viceregal train to formally mark the city's occupation as the capital of British India. They set off in a ceremonial procession seated in a silver howdah atop a huge elephant. Three hundred yards into Chandni Chowk extremists threw a bomb at the viceroy, killing outright the servant holding the ceremonial umbrella over his head. Hardinge himself felt as if someone had hit him hard on the back and poured boiling water over him.⁴⁵ Badly injured, he was rushed by motorcar to the newly readied Viceregal Lodge where he recovered slowly while Edwin Lutyens and the other members of the Town Planning Committee waited for him to finalise the site of New Delhi.⁴⁶ Clearly opposition to the British had not been left behind in Bengal.

Enlargements continued to be made to the temporary Viceregal Lodge as New Delhi was being built, the most notable being a ballroom constructed for the visit of the Duke of Connaught in 1920. This made it one of the most elaborate of the Raj bungalows. Typically it was surrounded by a deep verandah. On the western side, looking out towards a formal garden in the shape of a Mughal charbagh, dotted with slim, evergreen cypress trees, was the viceregal suite. To the east of these were drawing, sitting and dining rooms and a council chamber, and further east of these were rooms for guests for the domestic staff such as the pantry and the silver room. The large kitchen block was now south of the ballroom and to its east, near the ironing room and tailors' room were a range of staff quarters. On the surrounding estate were tennis courts, a golf ground, and oddly English suburban style houses for European members of staff.⁴⁷

Lady Alice Reading, wife of Viceroy Lord Reading (1921–26), described the rows and rows of tents set up for guests and staff in the garden, and the building as 'a monster villa at

Monte Carlo with its marble balustrades, cactus and white shining balcony, with flowers and palms everywhere'.⁴⁸ She was vicereine when the Prince of Wales visited India in November 1921. A formal banquet was held for him in the ballroom lit by five chandeliers brought from Belvedere,⁴⁹ and while in Delhi he stayed in a specially built 'pavilion'—in fact another spacious bungalow—in the grounds where he posed for a photograph in the turban and uniform of the Jacob's Horse.⁵⁰ In the Prince's retinue was the young Louis Mountbatten, the future viceroy, and staying as the Readings' houseguest was the young Edwina Ashley. They already had an understanding, but it was in Room 13 of the Viceregal Lodge that Mountbatten formally proposed and she agreed to marry him.⁵¹ A marble plaque in the wall still commemorates the event. Years later, Mountbatten told this story at a dinner hosted by senior Congress leader, C.R. Rajagopalachari. Rajaji, remembering that those were also the days of the freedom struggle, replied, 'I ask myself where I was at that time—in room 65 of Vellore jail.'⁵²

Lady Reading revelled in having 'five gardens a year'. Apart from Delhi's Viceregal Lodge, there was one at Belvedere, one at Shimla and one at Mashobra. The fifth was the least known of any viceregal retreat—a simple, thatched Circuit House called Doon Court near the summer camping grounds of the Viceroy's Bodyguard on Rajpur Road in Dehradun. The full account of the camping grounds is included in the volume in this series about the President's Bodyguard.

Doon Court was a regular stop on the way up to Shimla, the hunting available in the nearby forests being a major attraction. In April 1921, Alice Reading described spending 10 days there with her husband and his staff in a totally 'unceremonious' atmosphere, with even the ADCs out of uniform in white flannels. By the bungalow she found 'a riot of sweetpeas, verbena, cornflowers and hollyhocks', the flowers of an English country garden. They lounged on the thatched bungalow's broad verandahs, looking out towards the Sivalik hills. In the evenings the band of the Gurkhas played for them on the lawns.⁵³

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VOL. VIII NO. 96

DELHI, FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 1931

PRICE ONE ANNA

DELHI "CONSPIRACY" CASE PRISONER DEAD

DELHI CONSPIRACY CASE

HEARING POSTPONED
TO 25TH

ACCUSED'S RIGHT
TO FREE COPIES OF
DOCUMENTS

Delhi, Wednesday.
The Special Tribunal of the
Delhi Conspiracy Case held a short
sitting to-day in the Secretariat.
The judges arrived exactly at 11
a.m. The accused were not sent
for to-day. All the counsel for pro-
secution and defence were present.

Three C. I. D. officers were
alongside the Press representatives.
Only three persons were sitting
in the visitors' gallery. Sum-
maries of the statements of
the chief approver, Kailash Pati
alias Sital, approvers Madan
Gopal, Balkrishnan and others made
before Mr. L. S. City Magistrate,
and statements of Musadai Lal,
Drahm Dutt, Brahmanand and
an Inspector Lachhman Singh.
Prosecution witness, made before
police and some other statements
were given to the defence, for
supplying to the accused. Eight
copies of each document were sup-
plied to Mr. Asaf Ali to be handed
over to the 6 accused represented
by him. One each was given to
Mr. S. N. Bose for his client and
6 copies each were given to
the court reader to be supplied
to the 6 accused, who are unre-
reented.

The statement of Kailash Pati,
approver, covers 10 pages, while
the summary supplied covers 10
pages.

Request for Free Copies
Mr. S. N. Bose counsel for Kapu
Chand, next urged that he should
be given copies of all documents, in
which were parts of the Prosecu-
tion records free of cost. He
quoted a High Court circular on
the subject, saying that accused
being in jail had a right to
have copies of all court docu-
ments free.

Mr. Asaf Ali also added that
accused were legally entitled to
free copies. They were en-
titled to full copies of state-
ments of approver search
this also. The application was
perfectly simple and he hoped
that the Crown Counsel would not
oppose it.

Mr. Zafarullah Khan, Crown
Counsel, replied that he had no
objection to the grant of copies
of those papers, which
were a part of the charges,
but the copies of various exhibits
could only be given, when they
became part of the record. Copies
could not be given from the
Police file.

Mr. Asaf Ali, if they are in
the custody of the Court, they form
a part of the record.

Mr. Zafarullah added that
search lists and other papers which
had not been proved, were not
parts of the record and their copies
could not be given.

Mr. Asaf Ali said he was sur-
prised at this interpretation. They
were entitled to copies of all search
list, proceedings of identification
proceedings etc. according to law.
"Orders Later"

The President announced that
the judges would consider the ques-
tion and pass orders later. He
asked the defence to inspect the
record and state as to the copies of
which documents they required.
Approver's Custody
The application with regard to
removing the approver from

"TALE OF INCOMPETENCE AND CARELESS- NESS"

Cawnpore Riots Enquiry
FURTHER ALLEGATIONS OF INACTIVITY
AGAINST LOCAL AUTHORITIES

LT.-COL. MACCULAN'S EVIDENCE

COMMISSIONER AS WITNESS OF POLICE
APATHY

"The Police did not give protection, and the did
not do what they could."
"They were playing the part of spectators while
rioting was going on..." were some of the
truths bluntly stated by an army officer before
the tribunal enquiring into the Cawnpore riots.

Cawnpore, April 21.
Lt.-Col. Macculan, Officer Com-
manding, was the first witness this
morning before the Government
Commission of Inquiry. This
officer supported the statement
made previously by his subor-
dinate officers.

The President of the Commission
asked whether during conference of
authorities question of introducing
martial law was even considered.
Witness replied: Officially, no.
It was never put to me.

About posting pickets witness
stated that military pickets were
posted partly by consultation with
civil authorities and partly because
he had seen that the situation
demanded more pickets.

From April 27 onwards things
were generally quieting down, and
he gradually began to withdraw the
troops for good.

Witness further submitted that
the strength of the military force
in the barracks on April 24 was
as follows:
110 Armoured cars; 597 out own
troops, 145 battery.

Military Strength
Question:—How many could you
use at one time in an emergency?
Answer:—Eighty armoured cars,
201 of our own troops and 45 from
the battery was the maximum
number that we could send.

Q.—Was the number of men that
were sent fixed in consultation with
the civil authorities?
A.—It was entirely my order. I
gave all the help I could. I was
asked for only a company to stand
by at the King Edward Medical
Hall.

Q.—Would you have favoured
martial law? If so, what action
would you have taken?
A.—I cannot judge what the civil
authorities were thinking about it.
It was up to them to decide. I do
not think I should have taken any
different action under martial law.
There might have been modifica-
tions of details.

"Protection"
Babu Vikramjit Singh, Chairman
of Municipal Board and a member
of the United Provinces Legislative
Council was the next witness. He
specially came down from Naini
Tal to give evidence.

In a written statement he
had submitted that a little
after 3 p.m. on first day
of riots he learnt that on Merton
Road, a temple had been set on fire.

He was informed that Mr. Islam
Nabi Khan and the Kotwal were
here, but none of them inter-
fered with the offenders. He also
learned that Shere Babu's Park
had been destroyed, and Mr. Sale,
Collector and Pandit Ramchandra
Dayal, Deputy Collector had left
the place a few minutes earlier. The
rioters were neither dispersed,
nor arrested nor fired upon.

Witness further described the
inadequacy of the police
arrangements.
Q.—What do you mean by say-
ing that police arrangements were
inadequate?
A.—I mean they did not give
protection, and did not do what
they could do.

Q.—What do you mean by
inadequacy?
A.—More police was wanted.
Q.—What do you mean "doing
nothing"?
A.—They were only playing the
part of spectators while rioting
was going on.

Witness, continuing stated that
he wrote two letters to the collector
on the morning of March 25, in
which he described how killing
and looting was going on, and
had suggested that no large crowd
with lathis should be allowed to
assemble.
On learning that lots of people
were in danger of their lives
in Baconganj, he asked for
some lorries to rescue those
people, and sent Mr. Sale an-
other letter suggesting that unless
he arranged for some armoured
cars and military, supplemented
by police aid under various
magistrates, the position would be
hopeless and that no one would be
safe. No action apparently was
taken, and then witness sent
another letter to Mr. Sale
suggesting stringent orders, the en-
forcement of the curfew order and
patrols by military and armoured
cars.

Witness maintained that in spite
of warning no help was given and
that all houses in Baconganj were
burnt and him to be killed.
Commissioner to inspect
Witness then telephoned the
Commissioner to come and see
things for himself. He came
on the morning of March
28th when Haziz Mahomed Sadique



FRONTIER CONGRESS LEADERS.—A group of workers
responsible for organising and leading the Congress move-
ment in the N. W. P. Province. Syed Lal Badshah and
Ali Gul Khan are in the middle of the garlanded group.

REELS R ID HEADMEN'S HOUSES

Guns Stolen in
Thayetmyo

Rangoon, April 21.
The houses of several head men
have been raided by rebels in
Thayetmyo, revenue receipts, des-
troyed and guns stolen. The
Thayetmyo is reported to have
been burned but the story is un-
confirmed. —A. P. I.

BURMA REBELLION TRIAL

Tribunal Discharges Five
Accused

Rangoon, April 21.
The prosecution closed today in
the rebellion trial at Pyawgyi.
The Tribunal discharged five of the
prisoners for want of evidence.
The last witness deposed that
Soya San had planned an attack
upon the Government and resis-
tance to payment of taxes. —A. P. I.

Additional Police for Aurma Towns

Rangoon, April 21.
Additional police have been
sanctioned to be employed in
Myingung and Inaahu townships,
in Henzada district, as a year in
view of the disturbed condition
there. —A. P. I.

LT. COL S. T. CRUMP DEAD

Sequel to Fall from Lift

Rangoon, April 21.
Lt. Col. S. T. Crump, J. M. S.,
Superintendent of the Dufferin
Hospital and Gynaecologist at the
Rangoon General Hospital, died
this morning, as a result of injuries
received yesterday in an accidental
fall from a lift. —A. P. I.

Continued from Oct 1—
Police custody to judicial custody
were postponed till 25 April,
because the Crown Counsel wanted
time to be ready to argue the point.
The case was adjourned till
25th when the Crown Counsel will
address the Tribunal with the
prosecution story.

The question of approver's
custody will also be decided on that
day.

Rangoon, April 21.
His Excellency Lord Willingdon
replying to the Governor of Burma
expressed great thanks for
cordial greetings. —A. P. I.

SOLVING CO MUNAL PROBLE

ANS RI SUGGESTS A
TRATION BOARD

JOINT ELECTORAT

DOOR OPEN FOR NE
TIATIONS

(From Our Special Correspondent)

Delhi, Wednesday

Dr. M. A. Ansari, who re-
turned this morning from Lucknow,
specially interviewed by
Hindustan Times representative
the question of solving the com-
munal problem. Asked as to how
this question could be solved,
he said that the best course was
to let him to be to appoint an arbi-
tration board, whose award should
be regarded as final. One arbitri-
to represent each community.

He suggested the follow-
ing names for the board:
Moh'tab A. Gandhiji, President.
H. H. the Nizam of Bhr
(Muslim).

Pl. M. M. Malaviya (Hindu).
Master Tara Singh (Sikh).
Dr. Ambikar (Depressed class).

Colonel Gilney (Anglo Indi
Dr. Datta (Christian).
Sir A. P. Parry (Non-Brahm
President of the All India Eu-
ropean Association to repres
Europeans.

He said he talked about
board to Mahatmaji also.
Mahatmaji had approved the. He
felt sure that Hindu, Musl
and other communities we
agree to the scheme.

Joint Electorates

"I was shocked that I
Irwin who ought to have b
better informed had said
Bombay that an overwhelm
majority of Muslims favou
separate electorates. Not
could have been more con-
trary to the facts," said the Doc
He asserted that majority
Muslims were decidedly in fav
of joint electorates.

Joint elect rates and adult f
olice would form the basis
discussion either with their
cordiligionists or with Hindu
Sikhs. Any constitution w
does not contain a provision
these two factors will be w
unacceptable to nation

Muslims of India" ac
Dr. M. A. Ansari. The Nat
alist Moslem Conference held
Lucknow, he said was one
the greatest success of the re-
time; and was most wonderfu
drawing together delegates f
all parts of India. I have n
before seen such representa-
from Bengal and Pun
Bihar also sent a good con-
including Sir Sultan Ahmed
Ali Imam, who has not had
recent years an opportunity
gains the wonderful change.

Ansari came over India in genera
Muslim community in parti-
was wonder struck with the re-
sentative character of the con-
fence and with the high level of
debate that took place at vs
meetings of the Subject Commi-
tee. One of the speakers had
with well considered and
out view backed by solid
and figures.

The Lucknow Resolutio
Referring to the in the resolu-
tion conference, Dr. Ansari
that there was nothing in
resolution which was not bas-
ed on fact and was in the nat-
alism and which did not ex-
press the feelings of the people.

(Continued on page 2)

GOVERNOR OF BANK OF ENGLAND

Mr. M. Norman Elected
for Eleventh Time

London, April 21.
For the eleventh time Mr.
Montagu Norman who arrived in
London to-night from the United
States where he had been secretly
conferring with American financiers
has been re-elected Governor of
the Bank of England. —Reuter.

THE VICEROY THANKS BURMA GOVERNOR

Rangoon, April 21.
His Excellency Lord Willingdon
replying to the Governor of Burma
expressed great thanks for
cordial greetings. —A. P. I.

A NEW PURPOSE FOR VICEREGAL LODGE

While the viceroy and his wife toured, the future of their Delhi home came under discussion. A university for Delhi was established in 1922 by an Act of the Central Legislative Assembly. There were two possible sites for its permanent campus—Raisina, near the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and the estate of the Viceregal Lodge. The arguments for the Viceregal estate were economic. As the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, wrote in 1925 to the Secretary of Education of the Government of India, ‘It must be remembered that unless the Circuit House is used for the university or a similar purpose the buildings in Rajpur, upon which a large amount of capital has been expended by the Government would fetch little more than their breakup value For myself I am strongly of opinion that the balance of advantage lies in adopting the Viceregal Lodge estate as the permanent site of the university.’⁵⁴

The decision did indeed go in favour of the Viceregal Lodge, and today it is the office of the university’s Vice-Chancellor. However, before it was handed over in 1933—the Viceroy Lord Irwin having moved to New Delhi in December 1929—the former Circuit House had one more role to perform. It became a courthouse trying young revolutionaries who had taken up arms to overthrow the British Raj.

These were members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association or HSRA whose leaders included Bhagat Singh and Chandra Shekhar Azad. Azad had been shot dead by police in Allahabad in February 1931 and Bhagat Singh had been hung in Lahore jail in March, just a month before the hearings in this case began. The 14 accused⁵⁵ were charged with waging war against the King-Emperor and a special tribunal known as the Delhi

Conspiracy Commission was set up to try them. The trial began in a unique location—the Conference Room of the South Block of the new secretariat, next to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Early in the trial one of the accused, Bishambar Dayal, died in the civil hospital where he had been transferred for an operation for appendicitis.⁵⁶

The Conference Room was only available until mid-November 1931 when government officials were due to move in. The delaying tactics of the accused ensured that the hearings progressed at snail’s pace and with South Block no longer available, the entire tribunal with its three session’s judges, prosecuting and defence counsels, clerk of court and 17 other functionaries shifted to the old Viceregal Lodge. This imperial residence now echoed with cries of ‘Down, Down Imperialism!’, ‘Inquilab Zindabad!’, ‘Bhagat Singh Zindabad!’, ‘General Chandra Shekhar Azad Zindabad!’ and ‘Shahidan-e-Vatan Zindabad!’, followed by lusty singing of patriotic songs, culminating with ‘Bande Mataram’. For much of the trial this was the prisoners’ daily routine after their arrival from Delhi District Jail and before the court sat. Here they protested against being handcuffed at night by spreading out a sheet on the floor of the dock and pretending to sleep, and ignored the proceedings by reading newspapers.

The case against them was difficult to prove and eventually abandoned, with individuals being charged with the crimes that applied to them. Bimal Prasad Jain who made explosives in the HSRA’s Delhi bomb factory that masqueraded as a business called ‘Hindustan Toilets’ was, for example, charged and convicted under the Explosives Act.⁵⁷

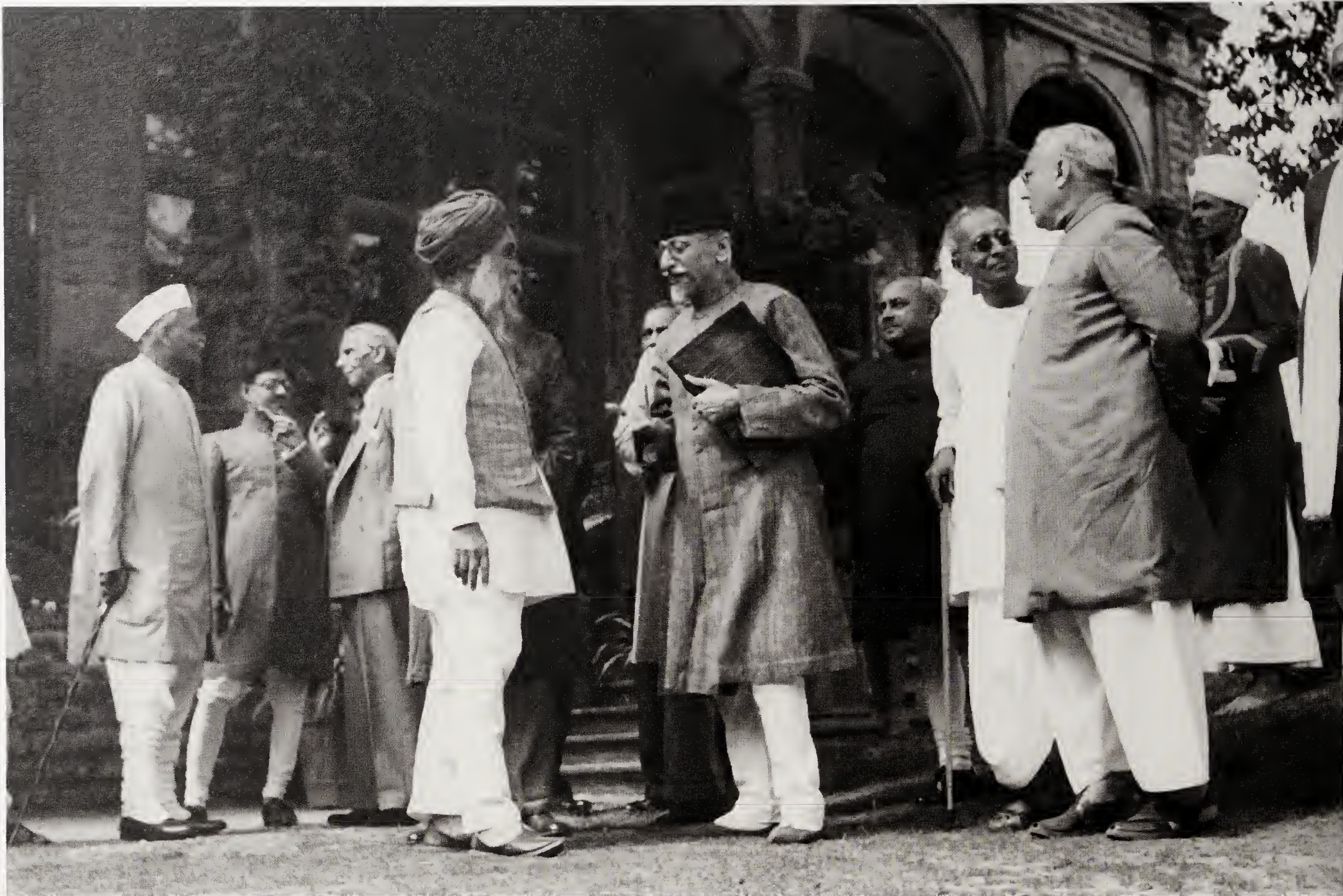
There is also a common belief that Bhagat Singh himself was held in a small, windowless room in the old Viceregal Lodge for some time, but no evidence has come to light to support this.

The front page of the Hindustan Times the day after the death of Bishambar Dayal, one of the accused in the Delhi Conspiracy Case tried first in the Central Secretariat and then at the former Viceregal Lodge [Source: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library]





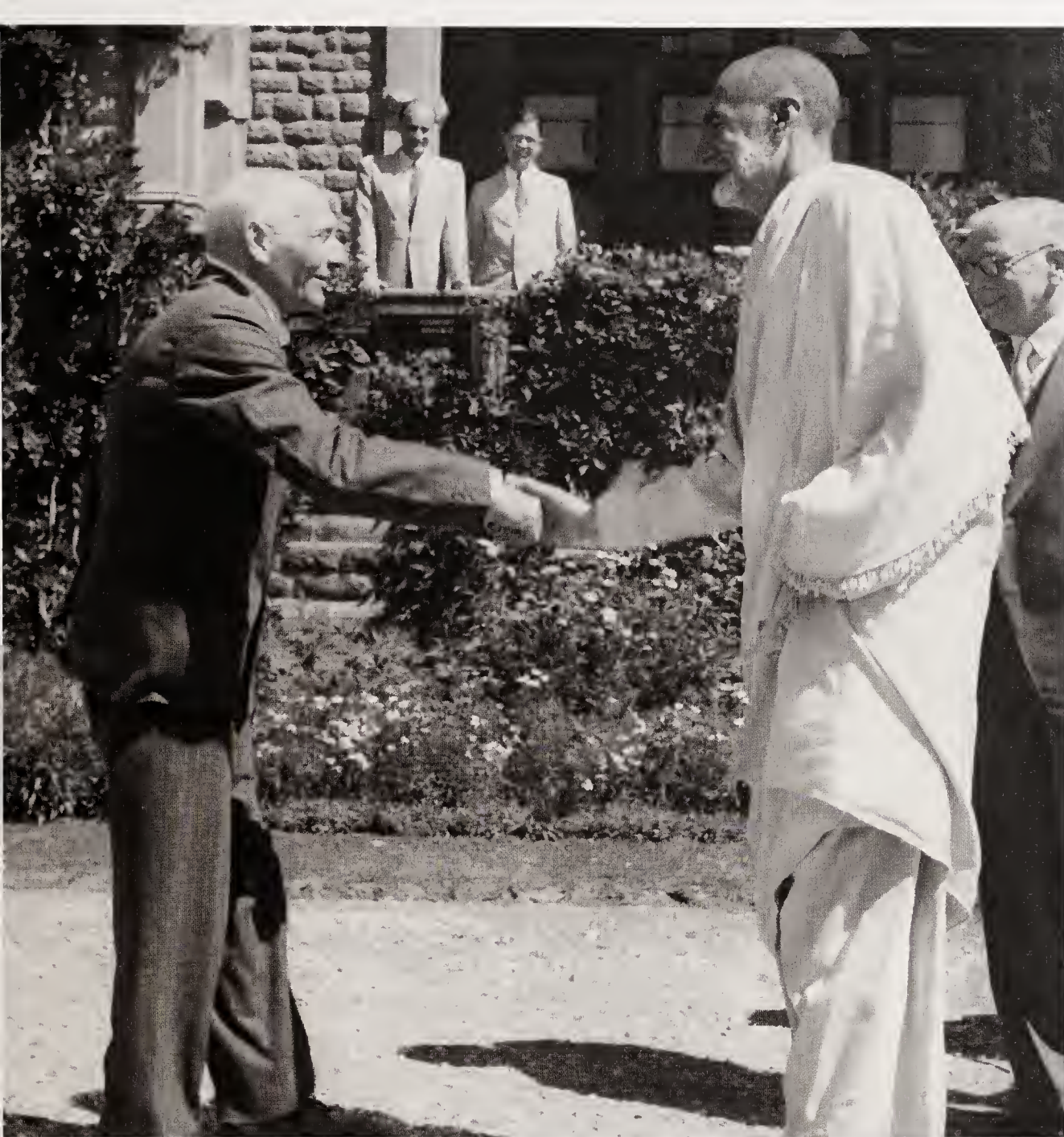
The former Viceregal Lodge is now the office of the vice-chancellor of Delhi University



POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONS

When the university finally took possession of the Viceregal Lodge, it became the first of the viceregal residences to have a new and positive purpose. After Independence they were all, one by one, transformed from within, and even in the years before Independence their nature began to change. They became places of negotiation, often unsuccessful, between the British and the Indian leadership.

In 1921, Mahatma Gandhi came to Shimla to have talks with Lord Reading and a decade later he returned to sign the Gandhi-Irwin Pact negotiated in New Delhi that would enable the Congress Non-Cooperation Movement to be suspended and the Mahatma to attend the first Round Table Conference in London. In June 1945, the viceroy Lord Wavell proposed a meeting in Shimla that would make his Executive Council more representative. Apart from the viceroy and commander-in-chief, all other members would be Indian, and they would, for the first time, control the portfolios of Home, Finance, and Foreign Affairs. Congress leaders were released from jail so that they could attend. They as well as senior leaders of the Muslim League, the Unionist Party of Punjab and the Akali leader Master Tara Singh came to the Viceregal Lodge for the conference. There were to be an equal number of Hindu and Muslim members. The talks broke down when Muhammad Ali



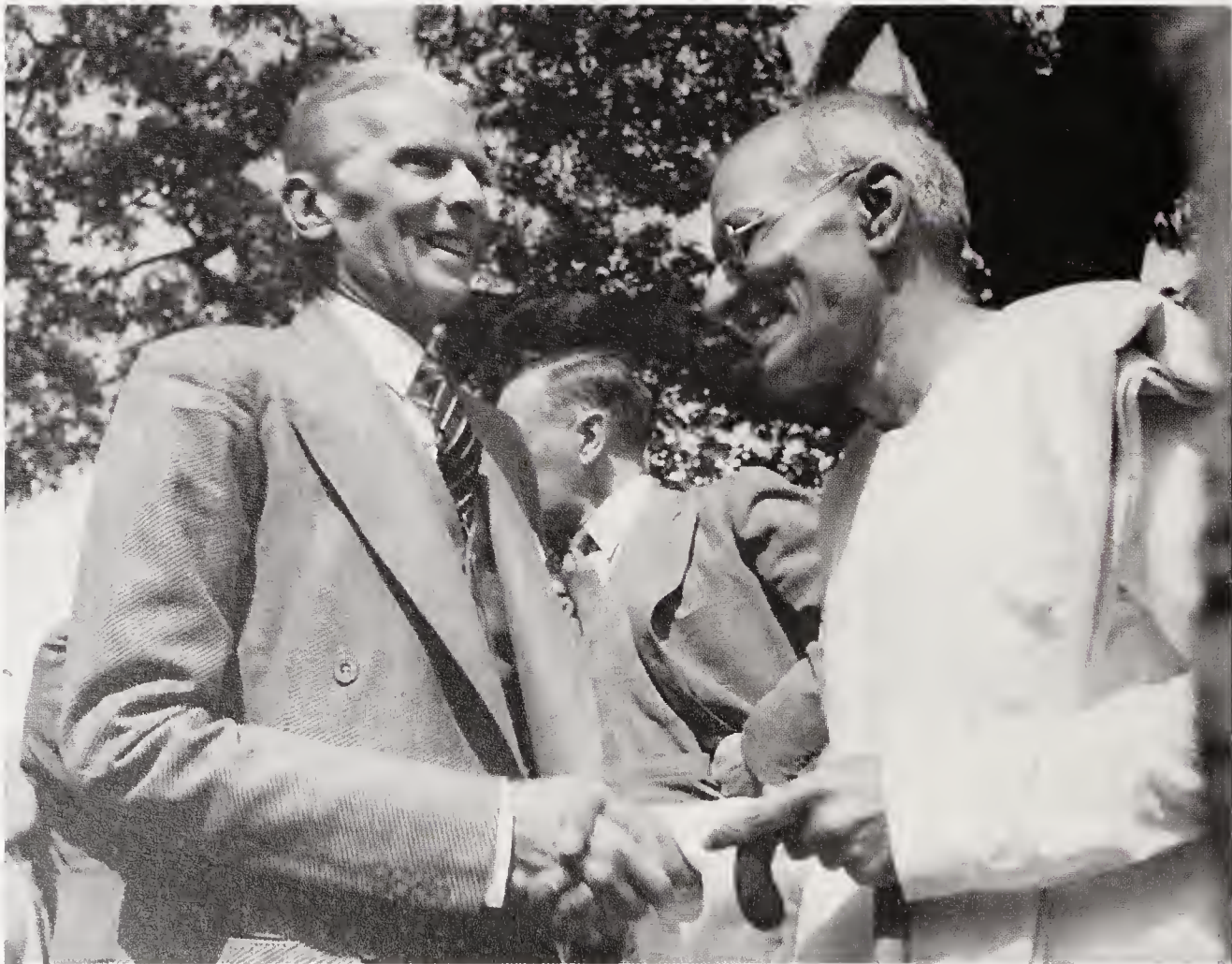
FACING PAGE: Indian leaders in conversation outside the Viceregal Lodge during the 1945 conference called by Lord Wavell. On the right are Dr Khan Sahib of NWFP and C. Rajagopalachari; in the centre the Congress president, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and the Akali leader Master Tara Singh; and on the left M.A. Jinnah of the Muslim League and Govind Ballabh Pant [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

LEFT: Lord Pethick-Lawrence, secretary of state for India and a member of the Cabinet Mission of 1946, greeting Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, before talks held at the Viceregal Lodge [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

Jinnah insisted that all the Muslim members should belong to the League. The following year Indian leaders again gathered at the Viceregal Lodge, this time for talks with members of the Cabinet Mission who came to India with the aim of reaching agreement on an 'acceptable machinery' for Indian independence. On this occasion too, differences between the Congress and the Muslim League could not be bridged.

When Independence finally dawned on 15 August 1947, Shimla celebrated on the Ridge in front of the old Gothic church, far away from Viceregal Lodge, but in Kolkata, Government House was at the heart of the celebrations. Its last British occupant, the governor William Burrows, appointed by Britain's post-war Labour government, was the antithesis of its aristocratic creator, the Marquis of Wellesley. A trade unionist who had been head of Britain's National Union of Rail workers, Burrows was apt to say, 'I'm not a hunting and shooting man, I'm a shunting and hooting man.'⁵⁸

On 14 August 1947, his guest at Government House was C.R. Rajagopalachari, also from a humble background. His father's salary as a munsif in Salem in South India had been a meagre five rupees. At the stroke of midnight, Burrows handed over charge to Rajaji who became the first Indian Governor of West Bengal. Fireworks had marked the inauguration of Government House in 1803 and fireworks again filled the sky in the early hours of 15 August 1947. The next morning Rajaji





unfurled the tricolor in the gardens of Government House and threw open its doors to the celebrating general public. Some 200,000 people poured into the compound, flooded the building, climbed the staircases and explored every nook and cranny, greeting British officers still posted there who replied with cries of 'Jai Hind!'⁵⁹

In February the next year, Rajaji had a more solemn duty as he carried an urn containing a portion of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes to Barrackpur. These he consigned to the waters of the Hugli while lakhs of mourners looked on. His staff had to hold him back as he leaned over the river holding the urn aloft, feeling that the ashes of his dear friend and colleague were drawing him down with them.⁶⁰ A small part of the Mahatma's ashes are today enshrined at Gandhi Ghat, next to a public park at Lat Bagan.

It was Rajaji's decision to hand over the house at Barrackpur to the state government, which in turn handed it to the West Bengal police. After Mountbatten left India in 1948, Rajaji moved from Kolkata to New Delhi to become free India's first and only governor-general. The Belvedere mansion was now at his disposal and at his suggestion it was given to the National Library.⁶¹ The library has now moved to a new building in the grounds of Belvedere and the former garden-house itself is being restored as part of an ambitious plan to make it a living museum called the Centre of the Word.

ABOVE LEFT: Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel leaving the Viceregal Lodge after talks with the members of the Cabinet Mission [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

LEFT: The Congress leader C. Rajagopalachari with M.A. Jinnah on the opening day of the 1945 conference held at the Viceregal Lodge [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

TOP: Governor-General C. Rajagopalachari at Barrackpur, immersing a portion of the ashes of his dear friend and colleague, Mahatma Gandhi, feeling as he did so that the ashes were pulling him downwards [Source: The family of C. Rajagopalachari]



Rajaji was also faced with deciding the fate of the viceroy's hunting grounds at Dehradun and Saharanpur. Wisely, he made them a wildlife sanctuary⁶² that in 1983 was merged with other forest areas to become Rajaji National Park. Doon Court, the Circuit House where viceroys stayed, now stands in a compound that houses the new residence of the Governor of Uttarakhand. The National Institute for the Visually Handicapped has been granted some 50 acres of the original Bodyguard Lines. On visits to Dehradun, presidents of India now stay in the bungalow that once housed the Commandant of the Bodyguard, that was in June 1976⁶³ renamed Rashtrapati Ashiana—a name suggested by President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's wife, Begum Abida Ahmed.⁶⁴ Since then Presidents Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, Giani

Zail Singh and K.R. Narayanan have all made brief visits. Meanwhile, although presidents do not make the move to Shimla for the hot weather, the stables of their Bodyguard at Dehradun are still in use for summering the weaker horses away from the extreme heat of the plains.⁶⁵

In 1950, Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the Republic of India. Rashtrapati Bhavan officially took its name and became the residence of the constitutional head of the world's largest democracy. The president still had his homes in the Himalaya but he had no base of his own in the south. To correct this the Rashtrapati Nilayam was adopted as his official retreat. In the following chapters, architect Anuradha Naik will uncover the history of this heritage building, and examine the growth of Secunderabad,



A view of Ashiana at the PBG estate in Dehradun [Photograph by Dinesh Khanna]

still one of the most important cantonments of modern India. She also considers the Nilayam in contrast to the magnificence of the old Hyderabad Residency that today forms part of a women's college.

But before that we shall turn to the story of the development of the hill stations of the western Himalaya, to Mashobra and to Shimla and the former Viceregal Lodge, now Rashtrapati Niwas. The latter reached its moment of transformation in 1965 when the internationally respected scholar of Indian philosophy and President of India, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, gifted its premises to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study as a place, in his words, 'to seek knowledge and not information' and for people of different cultures and points of view to meet

in a spirit of peace and co-operation.⁶⁶ The IIAS has over the years proved itself an institution of formidable academic credentials and attracted scholars from across India and the globe. At the same time, Rashtrapati Niwas has become the only one of our residences and retreats to have become a major tourist attraction open to the public for most of the year.

The aim of this team of authors and researchers is to unlock the histories of the President of India's two remaining retreats and through the pages of this volume open them to the public, presenting what we hope is a memorable portrait.

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CHAPTER II

THE COLONIAL BACKDROP TO THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

Yashaswini Chandra

Contrary to popular imagination, it was not the British colonists in India who discovered the salubrious potential of the Indian highlands but the Mughals.¹ The Great Mughals (particularly Akbar, 1542–1605, and Jahangir, 1569–1627) travelled to different parts of the western Himalaya (as corresponding to the current Indian states of mainly Himachal Pradesh as well as Jammu and Kashmir) in the quest to expand the frontiers of their empire, pausing at and extolling different places in the western Himalayan region such as Nurpur, before settling on the Kashmir Valley as their favourite. The Emperor Jahangir was particularly taken with Kashmir, making annual ‘pilgrimages’ and praising the natural beauty of the valley in his memoirs, the *Jahangirnama*. ‘Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring, a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding heritage of dervishes.’² However, the concept of the ‘hill station’ and the enterprise to establish hill stations in different parts of India—from the western and eastern Himalaya to the Western Ghats and the Nilgiri hills—can be entirely attributed to the British colonists.

Painting by Abanindra Tagore, ‘Night at the Shalimar The Emperor Shah Jahan’. This painting belongs to an allegorical series by Tagore evoking the beauty of Kashmir, some of which imagine the Mughal emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan in their beloved valley, The Charms of Kashmir by V.C. Scott O’Connor, 1920

ESCAPING THE PLAINS

In the Indian highlands, the British colonists found a climate and landscape less irksome than the heat and dust of the plains, and a native population sparser, and thus more manageable, even 'docile', than the dense population of the plains. Hill stations were intended to serve as enclaves for colonial society. The ideological considerations behind the project to develop hill stations have been delved into by a number of academic historians³ and are briefly referenced here. In India, as British rule became established, the colonists were faced with the paradoxical situation of upholding the imperial project in an unfavourable setting. In a manner of speaking, at the heart of the colonial enterprise to establish hill stations lay expatriate anxiety as the colonists were confronted with an alien climate, landscape and culture, and a hostile native population in the plains. Its tropical climate became the ultimate metaphor for the imagined ills of India—congestion, miasma, disease and decay. It can be said that the most paranoid feelings were reserved for the climate as Victorian medical opinion condemned it in the most damning, racist terms. The climate, indeed the general environment of the plains, was believed to have a physically and morally degenerating impact on the European race, an indictment exemplified by the report of the British Parliamentary Select Committee on Colonisation and Settlement of

India of 1857.⁴ The committee deemed India unfit for permanent settlement as sustained exposure to the heat of the plains would render the European constitution weaker with each generation leading to the degeneration of the European race in India. A more humorous description of the physical privations of colonial life in the plains is provided by Christina Sinclair Bremner:

'Oh India! thy curse is not the Congress-wallah, who wants to push his finger into the political pie, to the disgust of his proud rulers, not the bunniah who is said to enslave the whole village by providing food in times of dearth or scarce work at extravagant rates, not the Russian scare which possesses the mind and soul of Punjabi rulers, not the want of courage in the Bengali Baboo, not the disorganisation of thine ancient arts and manufactures by the importation of machine-made British goods, not the salt and income taxes which thy sons do much detest, not child-marriage nor woman's slavish position, no, the real curse of India is the mosquito. At least I found it so. At Dehlie, there are wondrous buildings: by Junna's banks a mosque lifts two tall tapering figures to the sky ... tombs endless are there, but who can study to revive that strange past with calm and thoughtful mind when the mosquito fiend tortures and poisons him?'⁵

Archival photo, 'Rest, warrior, rest'. From Allan Newton Scott, 'Sketches in India; taken at Hyderabad and Secunderabad, in the Madras Presidency', London, 1862. A British 'warrior' takes a 'well-deserved' rest after having battled the elements in the Indian plains. Note the simple measures such as the high cot and mosquito net used as protection against the miasma of the plains [Source: Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, Cambridge]





Coloured aquatint by Robert Havell and Son, 'House of Rana of Cote Gooroo'. After J.B. Fraser, plate 6 in 'Views in the Himala Mountains', published Rodwell & Martin, London, 1820. This print depicts the colonial representation of the Indian highlands as vast empty spaces, sparsely populated and ruled by minor chiefs [Source: The Retreat, Mashobra]



It is against this background that the highlands were discovered and promoted as refuge within India against the ills of the plains. From the 1820s, the highlands began to gain a reputation for salutary climate. The official medical establishment that had condemned the plains as dangerous for European health endorsed the highlands as beneficial, leading to the establishment of sanatoria for British troops in India.⁶ Convalescents, the elderly, the infirm, women and children, that is the ‘vulnerable’ sections of the colonial community, increasingly sought a healthy and invigorating environment in the highlands. It was only much later that it was found that the highlands could be as susceptible to the outbreak and spread of diseases as any other region in India, especially in the face of the pressures of human habitation, increased in the case of the highlands by the influx of the colonists (along with their Indian staff) themselves.⁷ The Shimla (then known as Simla) area, for example, was struck by cholera epidemics in 1857, 1867 and twice in the 1870s.

Certain specific events fed the feeling that in the highlands, the colonial population would find the solution to the problems of the plains. The cholera pandemic that spread throughout the Indian subcontinent and even overseas between 1817 and 1821, killing many British troops in India, increased the fear of diseases in the plains. ‘Like meat, we keep better here’, in the cooler, and presumably more sanitised, climate of the highlands, declared Emily Eden, the sister of the governor-general, Lord Auckland, in 1838.⁸ The 1857 Revolt convinced the colonial population that they were not safe in the plains. It was felt that during the disturbance of 1857, neither the people nor the rulers in the highlands had made trouble for the colonists, as

opposed to the unruly population and their rebellious rulers of the plains. Having decided that the indigenous communities of the various Indian highlands were more peaceful and governable than the native population of the plains, the colonial settlers set about romanticising them. Dane Kennedy has traced remarkable similarities in the colonial discourse generalising the population of different highlands as unrelated as the Paharis of Shimla, the Lepchas of Darjeeling and the Todas of Udhagamandalam (then known as Ootacamund). All these regions were coveted for hill stations and the associated populations were felt to be marked by innocence and simplicity—in essence, ‘nature’s children’.⁹ This fascination with these local people included an element of fetishising them as the colonists inserted them into their experiences of hill stations by attending local festivals, viewing folk dances, and acquiring local handicrafts and curios.¹⁰

EMPIRE IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

Colonial engagement with the western Himalaya began during the 18th century, marked as it was with the spirit of ‘discovery’, and developed in the 19th century, urged on by the colonial enterprise to explore, chart and secure their South Asian empire. The motives for the increasing interest in the region also included its centrality to trans-Himalayan trade and its wealth of natural resources such as timber.

The 19th-century explorers and adventurers that traversed the western Himalaya were doubly motivated by post-Kantian aesthetic categories such as the ‘sublime’ and the ‘picturesque’—both of which the Himalayan

FACING PAGE: A typical postcard depicting the Sipi Fair. Such imagery juxtaposing the colonists with locals from the highlands is reflective of the colonial tendency to romanticise, even fetishise, such populations, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

region lent itself to—and by the prospect of navigating the uncharted terrain or ‘blank spaces’ on existing maps that increasingly overlapped with the growing territorial ambitions of the East India Company (EIC). Quotes such as this one by Major Sir William Lloyd (1821) were not uncommon: ‘Upon reaching the crest of the ridge at Semla, the vastness of the scene became oppressive. The lofty snowy range shone from the dense azure of the heavens Below was heaped a shattered mass of mountains, peaks and glens, ridges and valleys, some aridly bare, others luxuriantly rich. The ready materials for another world’.¹¹

Pre-existing modes of culture, politics and economics were integrated into the colonial plans for the region. The western Himalaya was at the centre of an intricate trade network that linked Central and South Asia, two routes emerging as the most prominent by the 19th and 20th centuries: through Srinagar, and through Lahaul and Kullu.¹² The most important commodity to pass through this region was wool from Tibet, including the famed pashm wool, which was spun into pashmina shawls in the shawl industries of Kashmir and Punjab for burgeoning European markets. Other valuable goods included salt, borax and tea from Tibet and China, grains and spices from the Indian regions, and drugs such as opium from Central Asia, and charas, or hemp, from South Asia.¹³ The colonial state was eager to extend its sphere of influence to the region and tap into this lucrative trade network.

The EIC gained a foothold in the Himalaya with the conclusion of the Anglo-Gurkha War, the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli in 1815. It restored the territories ceded by Nepal to local rulers but retained some strategic posts. In a move typical of the EIC’s manipulation of local rulers by playing one against the other, it deprived the Keonthal hill state of half its territories for not paying war dues and rewarded the maharaja of Patiala for his help in the conflict with the Gurkhas by transferring some of this land in return for a yearly *nazrana*, or tribute, of Rs 280,000. It had decided that ‘a delicate balance of hostility would be useful for British interests and ensure the preservation of tranquillity for British commercial objectives’.¹⁴ The

hold on the region increased with the conclusion of the Anglo-Sikh Wars in 1848, the territories of Lahaul and Spiti coming under direct British control. The colonial government hoped that control of Lahaul–Spiti would give it a stake in the wool trade between Tibet and India that passed through the area.

It made a number of efforts to promote western Himalayan trade through its territories. In 1850–51, the governor-general, Lord Dalhousie, initiated the construction of the Hindustan–Tibet Highway to provide an alternative to the trade route that passed through Ladakh. Using *begar*, or compulsory labour, alongside prisoners in the hills,¹⁵ as well as the arsenals of gunpowder left over from the Second Anglo-Sikh War to blow up the mountainous boulders that came in the way,¹⁶ a road was soon built from Kalka in the foothills of the Sivalik range all the way to Kalpa (Chini). Dalhousie also had a personal attachment to Kalpa, a good 150 miles from Shimla and deep in the interior, where he spent the monsoon. Even though the highway was not all that it was cracked up to be—only eight-feet wide at the most after Shimla—it came to be, until the establishment of the mountain railway in the late 19th century, the arterial road that connected the plains of northern India to the main centres in the western Himalaya. In the late 1860s, the government would pit the trade route that passed through its territories—Lahaul–Kullu—against the one that traversed Kashmir, including Srinagar, and fell under the control of the Dogra state.¹⁷ However, not much came of this rivalry since the former route remained less popular than the latter, as it was inaccessible for two or three months longer in winter and not as well provided with en-route provisions.¹⁸ In 1867, the government established the trade fair at Palampur to encourage ‘our trade with eastern Turkistan’.¹⁹ In the 1870s, the short-lived Central Asian Trading Company was established. However, ‘this low-budget project . . . attracted significant press coverage but failed in its objective of opening up the markets of Yarkand and Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan’.²⁰

Besides looking at the western Himalaya as a frontier that would open up Central Asia, the colonial state was also fascinated by the wealth of natural resources—most



Coloured aquatint, 'The Town of Rampore', early 19th century. The town of Rampur became the last capital of the hill state of Bushahr and an important trade depot connecting northern India with western Tibet, the site of the Lavi trade fair [Source: The Retreat, Mashobra]



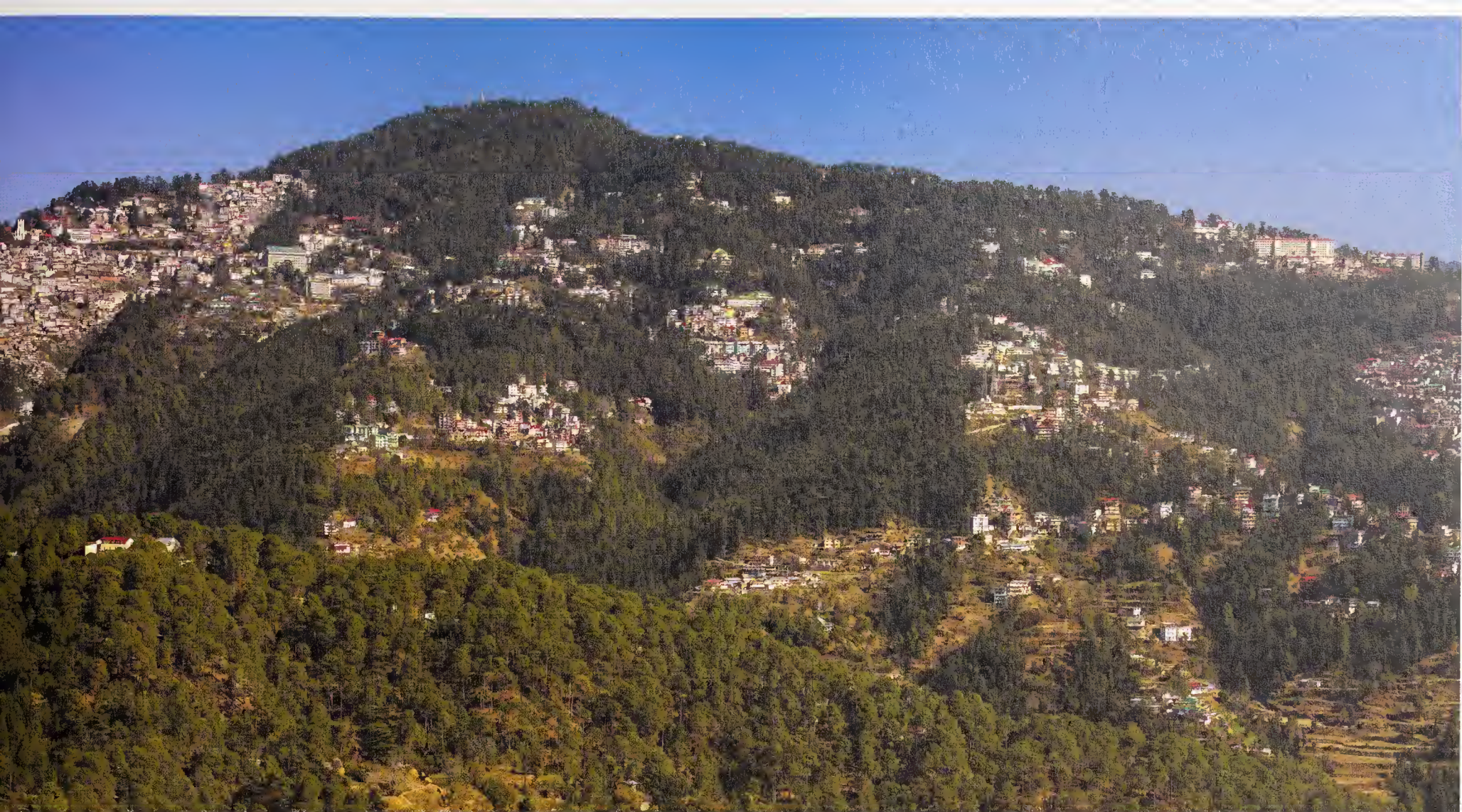
A panoramic view of the hills of Shimla

importantly, the vast deodar forests. The earliest colonial officers who were deputed to survey the forests in this region often represented the railway or the public works department.²¹ 'Influenced by the positivist ideology of German forestry, forests were perceived as objects to be tamed and scientifically managed. British administrators sought to achieve this goal by bureaucratising access rights, monitoring cuttings, and adhering to strict conservation policies.'²² The government attempted to usurp rights over forests from the local elite, who did not necessarily view these forests as a 'natural resource' waiting to be exploited for commercial ends. From the 1880s onwards, there was consistent pressure from the forestry officials from Dehradun on the rulers of nearby hill states to relinquish their rights over the forests that could directly be leased out to the government.²³ In Bushahr, for instance, forests were leased out to the government for 50 years at an annual sum of Rs 10,000 and a nominal fee for each tree cut. Furthermore, the Bushahr court was required to provide the government with labour, besides provisions for

forestry officials, further intensifying the need to institute *begar*.²⁴ Thus, although *begar* had its roots in a pre-colonial feudal order, the need for it increased during the colonial period. There are hints of tension of between the rana of Keonthal and the colonial government on the issue of granting timber trees.²⁵

HILL STATIONS IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

In the western Himalaya, as with other Indian highlands, various kinds of hill stations—as the predominantly colonial settlements in the mountains came to be called—emerged. They were sites for imperial or provincial capitals, the army, education (British-style boarding schools, military asylums and missionary schools), retreat and even experimentation. Shimla, as the summer capital of the colonial government, typified the first kind. Sabathu, Jutogh and Dharamshala became established as cantonment towns. Mussoorie, in the present state of



Uttarakhand, and Dalhousie became known for their convent and boarding schools. The first of the Lawrence Military Asylums for children of British subalterns in India was raised in Sanawar near Shimla. Little hill stations such as Mashobra and Narkanda developed as places of retreat, often as satellite sites to more bustling hill stations, as in the case of Shimla–Mashobra. In Palampur, the colonists experimented with growing tea and engaging in western Himalayan trade.²⁶ In the Kullu valley, a small community of colonists successfully introduced apple and trout, even settling there permanently.²⁷

Besides being divided as such on the basis of their nature, these hill stations also catered to different classes of colonial society. British society in India was a deeply hierarchical one, the unevenness of it based on the notion of class in Britain, but it developed along specific lines in the context of the colonial setting.²⁸ At the top of this pecking order were the ‘heaven-born’ civil servants and the military

officers, their pre-eminent position guaranteed in no less than a Warrant of Precedence of the government. At the middle and lower levels were the missionaries, businessmen, managers and traders. Shimla was the poshest hill station, attracting the highest echelons of colonial society, while Dalhousie, in comparison, was the poor man’s.

Whereas Shimla became known for a lively and cosmopolitan society, Dharamshala was considered positively provincial in comparison: ‘the very atmosphere is one of calm; no scandal, and no dissipation stronger than black coffee and milk-punch.’²⁹ Later the politics of race would add a further dimension to the categorisation of hill stations as the Indian princely set and upper class looked to emulate the colonial lifestyle there, as will be discussed in a later section. Kept out of the favoured European bastions in the highlands, they created alternatives such as Chail and, to an extent, Mussoorie.³⁰



CAPITAL IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

By the 1860s, hill stations were an established feature of colonial life, and indeed politics, as is exemplified by the establishment of the imperial and provincial summer capitals in different hill stations across the country. The western Himalaya was central to the colonial project to develop hill stations as strongholds of British society and politics, culminating in the declaration of Shimla as the summer capital of the government in 1864.

Captain Charles Pratt Kennedy, the political agent for the hill states, was the first person to build a permanent house, unimaginatively called Kennedy House, in the woody ridge of Shimla in 1822. He had earlier been acquainted with the Ridge as a hunting ground for game such as deer, jackal, bear and mountain goat. Indeed, the medical argument in favour of the highlands' environment also emphasised it as conducive to outdoor activities befitting the European male—hunting, fishing, trekking and hiking. As colonial interest in the area grew, land was acquired for the establishment of a settlement mainly from the maharaja of Patiala and the rana of Keonthal.

A major shift in this region occurred when Sir John Lawrence agreed to stay on as the viceroy only on the condition that the imperial capital would shift annually to Shimla during the hot summer months between March and October. Thus, from a sleepy sanatorium town located in the fringes of the empire, Shimla came to be the very centre of it. It was felt that Shimla would be a safe haven from the upheavals of the plains. It would also provide a vantage point for keeping an eye on the recent colonial acquisitions of the provinces of Punjab and Awadh in the plains below. It would further be a base to trade with and even expand into Tibet and Central Asia. Lawrence claimed that 'we will do more work in one day [in Shimla] than in five down in Calcutta [now Kolkata]'.³¹ Whether or not this was true, the fact remained that in the days before the introduction of the

mountain railway, the journey from Kolkata to Shimla was both extremely expensive and time-consuming. The entire officialdom—person, bag and baggage—would travel from Kolkata to Ambala by train, reach Kalka in the foothills by *dak-gharry* and *tonga*, or horse-drawn carriages, and then ride up the newly constructed Hindustan–Tibet Highway on horseback, in bullock-carts and in *tongas*. *Begar* was commonly used to ensure that the deliverables reached Shimla in one piece. The summer traffic to Shimla would only grow, necessitating the extension of the railway line from Ambala to Kalka, and the construction of the spectacular Kalka–Shimla Railway by the beginning of the 20th century. A feat of railway engineering, the line between Kalka and Shimla included 103 tunnels and 800 bridges cutting through the vertiginous terrain.

The mountainous landscape of Shimla had to be laid out with a whole lot of offices, homes and institutions such as hospitals, clubs and shops to address the various needs of the floating, seasonal population.³² Shimla, as an imperial centre, was not based on a master plan like New Delhi. Surrounded by a ring of 'hills' such as Prospect Hill, Observatory Hill, Strawberry Hill and the tallest peak of Jakhu, Shimla is perched on a steep and woody ridge and is known for its *khuds*, or deep ravines. The only road that connected Shimla to the outside world was the Old Cart Road bringing in much-needed supplies for the summer capital of the British Raj. The European hub was dominated by Christ Church set on top of the Ridge, which was connected to the Mall Road, filled with its neatly ordered, half-timbered shops, restaurants and other commercial enterprises that were meant to service the colonial elite. The Mall Road was built on the debris of the Upper Bazaar shops that were razed to the ground by the Simla Improvement Committee of 1876. Below this European centre lay the ramshackle, tin-roof houses of the Lower Bazaar and Lakkar Bazaar that housed the working and service class of Shimla.

ABOVE LEFT: Simla, 1863. Since its construction, the Christ Church on the Ridge has dominated the landscape of Shimla [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

LEFT: The Town Hall in Shimla facing the Mall Road. Note the eclectic style of the building with features such as the neo-Tudor gable and the dormer windows



HOME IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

'Simla, a very English town 6000 feet up in the Himalayas, surrounded by deodar and oak forests and with snow peaks shimmering in the distance, is quite different [in comparison with winter capitals in the plains]. There the viceroy lived and worked in a Scottish-looking gable-windowed turreted stone castle surrounded by acres of lawns at descending levels and with views of the snow to the north. His officers lived up and down the sides of the ridges in bungalows that might well have come straight out of the Lake district in England. The town also offered fashionable shopping on the Mall, first-class hotels, an amateur theatre and, in Annadale valley, a polo ground. *From here the affairs of teeming millions in the hot plains of India seemed remote and unimportant.*'³³

The prospect of recreating domestic, and in turn socio-cultural life, at 'home' (that is Britain) was a major incentive in the development of hill stations. The highlands presented a setting conducive to the cause. They were distanced from the plains and the population of Indians was smaller. Spring and summer in the hills reminded the colonists of the European climate. In the western Himalaya, they found 'Indian cousins' of European vegetation: trees such as cedar and spruce, flowers such as daisies, violets, irises and geraniums, fruits such as strawberries and blackberries. Here they could cultivate, for example, fruits evocative of home—apples, peaches, plums, apricots and pears.³⁴ The dramatic Himalayan landscape appealed to both the prevailing British aesthetics of the sublime and the picturesque. The western Himalaya was described in terms of the awe-inspiring sublime, born of the Victorian sense of adventure. Yet the same landscape could be 'tamed', recalling the Victorian discourse of the dominance of man

ABOVE: The Gaiety Theatre was at the hub of socio-cultural colonial life in Shimla with the Amateur Dramatic Club regularly staging British plays

RIGHT: Interior of the Gaiety Theatre





ABOVE: Archival photo of the mail tonga parked at one end of the Mall Road, which was lined with fanciful buildings, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

FACING PAGE: Archival photo of the Lakkar Bazaar, 'one of the many bazaars' housing the Indian working class of Shimla, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



LUNKUR BAZAAR, SINDH



over nature, and made picturesque.³⁵ The western Himalayan landscape was rendered picturesque along the lines of the British rural idyllic as its slopes, glens, ridges and precipices were nestled with houses resembling British country houses and Alpine cottages. Colonial houses were a crucial factor in enabling the imaginative negotiation of the western Himalaya by the nostalgic expatriates.

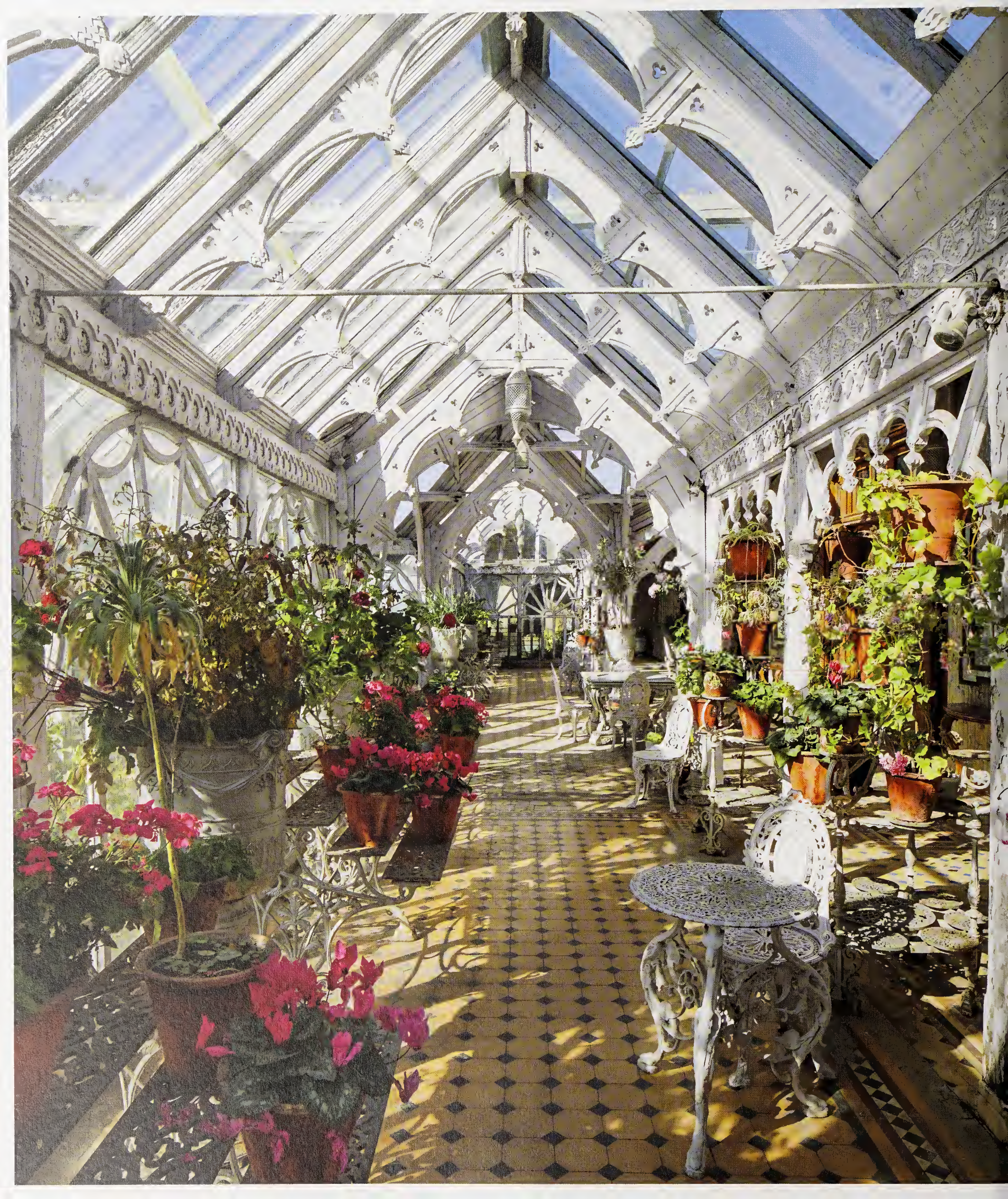
‘The nearest thing most Anglo-Indians got to a place in the country . . . was a rented house in one of the hill stations.’³⁶ The straight lines and 90° angles of the civil lines and cantonments laid out along a grid pattern in the plains were replaced in the highlands with settlements that traced the undulating contours of the landscape. Unlike the standardised bungalows of the plains, colonial houses in the western Himalaya were based on European models, were individualistic, even idiosyncratic.

A range of colonial houses was built in the western Himalaya. Shimla, for example, once featured stately residences (such as the Viceregal Lodge and the commander-in-chief’s residence, Snowdon), large houses (such as Peterhof, Rothney Castle, Stirling Castle, Barnes Court, Chapslee and Woodville) and numerous individual cottages. On one hand, these buildings sought inspiration

The two existing viceregal turned presidential properties, the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla (to the left), and The Retreat, Mashobra (to the right), represent two ends of the spectrum in terms of colonial architecture and life in the Shimla–Mashobra region. Note the Elizabethan ‘gothic’ appearance of the former Viceregal Lodge (ILAS) as opposed to the more ‘comfortable’ charms of The Retreat, essentially a large European cottage more typical of the colonial architecture of the region







from different British architectural styles such as Elizabethan (the Viceregal Lodge), Scottish baronial (Gorton Castle) and neo-Tudor (individual cottages). On the other, the 'fantastical' appearance of hill stations such as Shimla is attributable to the 'Swiss-chalet-style' of most of its cottages, including the notable example of The Retreat in Mashobra.³⁷ Constance Cumming might well have been describing The Retreat when she pronounced Shimla residences as a 'good deal like Swiss chalets, having verandahs upstairs and down. Moreover, they are generally two storeys high'.³⁸ Thus, the region came to be not just a canvas for expatriate memories of Britain but also a playing-ground of sorts—with Shimla drawing comparison with English resort towns such as Bath, Brighton and Margate that were known for their social life.³⁹

These colonial houses were built using the local *dhajji* method of construction, in which a framework of timber baulks interlaced at the corners was packed with roughly dressed dry stones. The impression of European cottages was achieved through design features such as pitched and gabled roofs, dormer windows, fretwork, bay windows, and canopied windows and balconies. A distinctive feature of the colonial landscape of this region has been the roofs of corrugated, galvanised iron sheets, originally shipped from England.

The colonial home in the western Himalaya occupied a place between the middle-class home in Victorian Britain and the colonial bungalow in the plains; the former was more and the latter less conducive to divisions between male and female spaces, spaces for children and servants.⁴⁰ Diverging from the single-storey bungalows inhabited by the colonists in the plains, the houses in hill stations would usually be divided into two storeys. The lower storey would contain the common areas such as the reception, drawing room, dining room, smoking room and library, whereas the upper one would be laid with private rooms such as the bedrooms, dressing rooms and nursery. In these homes, personal privacy would be more likely than in the bungalows in the plains, consisting of interconnected rooms, with Indian servants having the run of the place. Larger houses (such as Northwood in Shimla) would include a service staircase for the servants. Little is known about the

interiors of the colonial homes in the western Himalaya since existing properties have since been renovated on the inside, if not on the outside, retaining only the impression of British homes. However, it would appear that just as colonists in the hill stations were at pains to build houses based on British models, they appointed the interiors along the lines of the fashions prevalent in Britain at the time. An example of an existing property in Shimla that hints at this is Chapslee, formerly the Secretary's Lodge associated with Auckland House. It was originally built in circa 1830 and changed hands several times before it was bought by a raja of Kapurthala nearly a century later. Chapslee to date is done up entirely in European style. The walls are covered in wallpaper, and the panelling, false ceiling and staircases are made of teak. The wall above the landing of the entrance staircase is hung with a collection of hunting trophies and arms. Edwardian flourishes are seen in the collection of European ceramics and bric-à-brac. However, the continental flavour is unique to the place, attributable to the Francophile taste of its original owner from Kapurthala. Another major example of English interiors is provided by The Retreat in Mashobra, as is discussed in the next chapter. Nostalgia for home in Britain was sealed in the names given to these colonial houses—names such as Rose Cottage, Glenmore Cottage, White Haven, Silver Oaks, Northbanks and Fairlawns, besides the ones mentioned above.

Colonial lifestyle in the western Himalaya was the other side of the coin in the imaginative negotiation of the region. The colonial community in the hill stations was more closed than anywhere else in India for two reasons. First, given the association of the hill stations with different classes of the British in India, the colonial community here had more of a chance to mingle with the same class. In isolated postings in the plains, they had to make the most of the small local British community there, often forced to bypass class prejudices simply for lack of choice. Second, the colonial community in the hill stations did its best to keep all Indians at bay to preserve the myth of a home away from home. In this endeavour, they were indiscriminate: looking to sideline Indian princes as much as the Indian service

The observatory/glasshouse in Rotlney Castle, built by A.O. Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, in 1880. Note the European-origin flowers such as cyclamen that have come to be typical of the homes in Shimla





LEFT: The former Bantony Castle incorporates such 'fantastical' elements of colonial architecture in Shimla as elaborate gables, excessive fretwork and decorative turrets within the half-timbered framework

TOP: The YWCA building used to be Constantia, one of the oldest large houses to have been built in Shimla in the early 19th century

class, adopting different mechanisms to keep upper- and lower-class Indians at arm's length.

'At the symbolic centre of nearly every English village stood the Anglican Church, and so it did in nearly every Indian hill station.'⁴¹ The colonial settlements in the western Himalaya were no exception to the rule. In fact, church-going was an important marker of British lifestyle in the region. If the viceroy, Lord Lytton, is to be believed then Shimla would have represented a more decorous, church-centric place in the late 1870s than the wild, fun-loving place immortalised by Rudyard Kipling a decade later. 'He wrote wistfully to Lady Salisbury in England: "I envy you the pleasure of living amongst so many naughty people. Our social surroundings here are so grievously good . . . the young ladies are not allowed to dance lest they should dance to perdition; and I believe that moonlight picnics were forbidden last year by order of the Governor-General in Council lest they should lead to immorality. I wish I could report that our Empire is as well defended as our piety"'.⁴²

In the western Himalaya, the colonists walked the Mall, made social calls and went to parties in the attempt to recreate British socio-cultural life, not forgetting to make the most of their picturesque Himalayan backdrop as is apparent from the popularity of outdoor picnics. However, this propensity for outdoor picnics was more reflective of nostalgia for such activities celebrating British country life rather than a love of the Himalaya. In the manner of the local British manor house, the Viceregal Lodge took the lead in throwing elite parties. Even on the eve of the Second World War, presiding over an Indian empire in decline, the Viceregal Lodge in 1939 planned a dinner party for old Etonians in Shimla ('a Himalayan dinner' in the 'highest city in India', at which 'Eton songs' were played), a luncheon party in Annadale on the occasion of the Simla Horse Show and the Viceroy's Staff Dance.⁴³ The staff dance at least had to be cancelled 'owing to the outbreak of war'.⁴⁴ In sleepy colonial settlements such as Dharamshala and Kullu, the colonial community contended with more sedate British pursuits such as fishing, gardening and painting.





TOP LEFT: A 'sepia-tinted' view of Kashmir lying in The Retreat. Photo, early 20th century. Interestingly, within the 'European' interiors of colonial homes in the western Himalaya, the region was evoked through such images and artworks

TOP RIGHT: A modest neo-Tudor cottage in Shimla, late 19th century [Source: Alkazi Collection of Photography]

ABOVE RIGHT: An archival photo of a 'male space', the billiards room, in Snowdon, the residence of the commander-in-chief. As befits such a public male space in a stately home, it is richly appointed and hung with hunting trophies of, presumably, deer shot in the western Himalaya, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

ABOVE LEFT: A group photo from the viceroy's staff picnic in Amudale, circa 1892 [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



However, at least the unconventional minds were demystified. As Sara Jeannette Duncan, a Canadian journalist-writer married to a British civil servant in India, wrote: ‘...but what is Simla? An artificial little community which has climbed 8000 feet out of the world to be cool ... Simla is a geographical expression to be verified on a map and never to be thought of again’.⁴⁵

SEQUESTERING THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

The wishful thinking behind the setting up of hill stations was to establish a series of British oases. This meant that Shimla, as the imperial capital, would be required to be the most exclusive. However, the colonists in Shimla, as also in other hill stations, depended on a large Indian service class to attend to their needs—from hauling their persons and possessions up the mountains to sustaining their lavish lifestyle. Thus, the colonial authorities were faced with the double-edged problem of needing this class of Indians but not wanting them. They dealt with this predicament simply by removing the Indian working class from their sight by shunting them into ghettos secluded from the European parts.⁴⁶ This was easily done in the western Himalaya as the hill stations could be divided into Indian and European parts in the lower and upper reaches respectively, the former out of the immediate sight, and mind, of the latter. In Shimla, in stark contrast to the neat colonial houses, the vast majority of the Indian service class was cramped in congested pockets such as the Lakkar Bazaar and the Lower Bazaar in its lower reaches.

Shimla also continued to be surrounded by the hill states that it was carved of—Patiala, Keonthal and Koti. The sustained growth of the hill station depended upon an array of natural resources and services provided by these adjoining states, much to the discomfiture of the colonial authorities.

‘Simla is controlled by a municipal committee with fully qualified sanitary and engineering staffs on par with many European towns. Immediately adjoining and surrounding the station is an area of country belonging mainly to the Native States of Keonthal and Koti which although it forms the natural outlet for the expansion of Simla, is to all intents and purposes administered under medieval conditions. In this tract, the administration of justice depends entirely on the will of the Chief tempered by the influence of underpaid and venial officials, the arrangement for the preservation of law and order are hopelessly inadequate and sanitation in any modern sense is practically unknown. Were this tract, with its accompanying conditions situated at any reasonable distance from the state of Simla, the fact of its existence might possibly be ignored but unfortunately such is not the case. One cannot isolate Simla from its adjoining surroundings: the water supply is already situated in the extension area and further development to meet the yearly growing needs of the population must of necessity come from the same source. The milk supply is dependent on a cow keeping community who live and graze their cattle in the tract lying just beyond municipal limits and the provision of vegetables and green foods follows the same rule. There is a daily influx of numbers of the surrounding population for labour, marketing and other purposes and no dividing line between the town community and the country exists or can be created.’⁴⁷

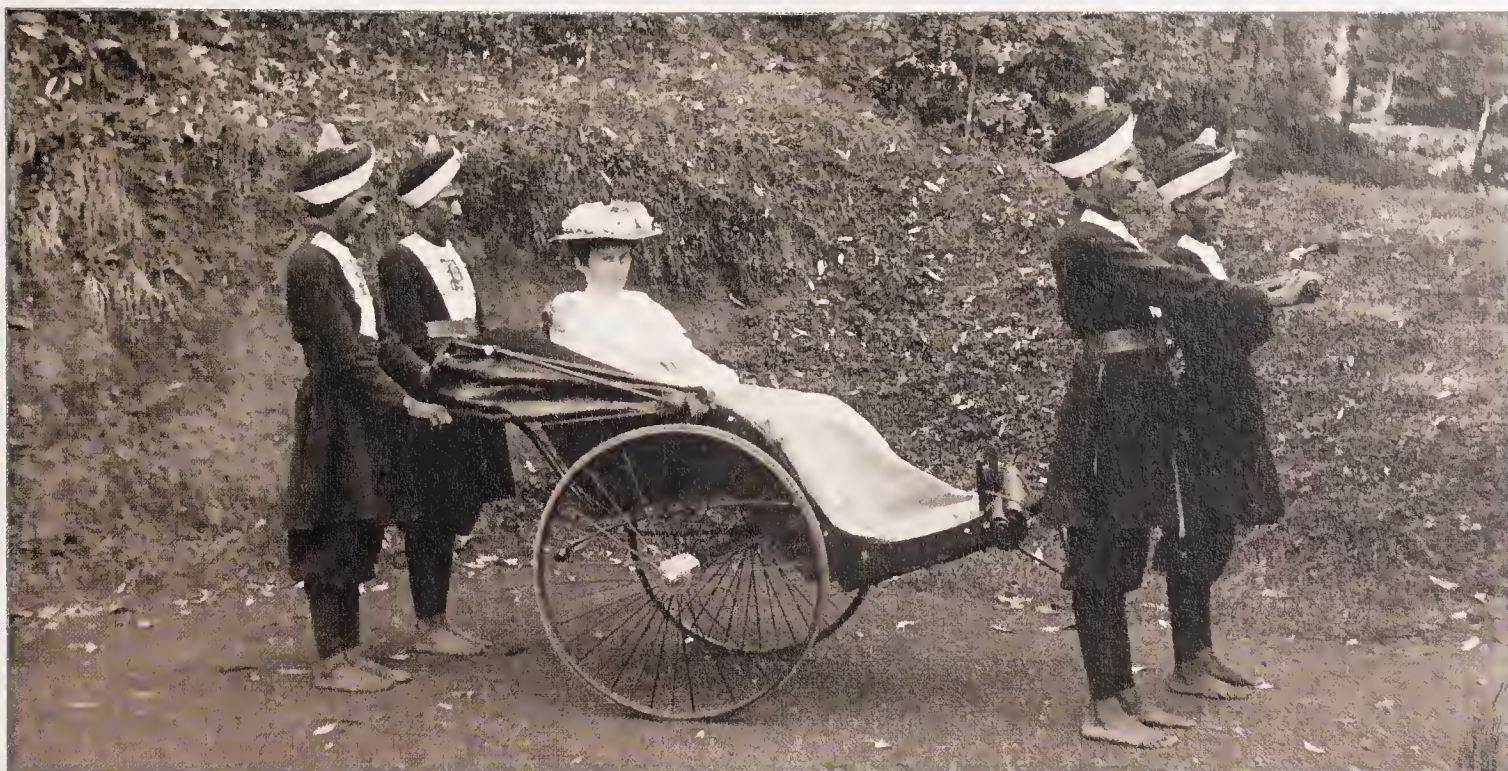
The bazaars of Sanjauli and Kasumpti that technically lay outside municipal limits came to be perceived as dens of vice that harboured all sorts of anti-social elements capable of disturbing the peace of the colonial settlement they catered to.

ABOVE LEFT: An archival photo of a picnic at Wildflower Hall in Mashobra where British men arrive on horseback and the women in rickshaws pulled by Indians, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

LEFT: A group photo of a small British family with two Indian male attendants at Kennedy House, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



An archival photo of woodcarvers (from possibly the Punjab) in their shop in the Lakkari Bazaar in Shimla, late 19th century. It is a reflection of the increasing cosmopolitanism of Shimla as imperial centre that it attracted specialist service providers from all over India [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



However, the service class was essential to the needs of the colonists and thus had to be tolerated. On the other hand, the Indian upper class was redundant in their worldview. It was testimony to the hauteur of the colonists in the hill stations that even the 'exotic' figures of the Indian princely elite were largely unwelcome.⁴⁸ Ironically, it was this very elite aura of the hill stations that attracted such upper-class Indians to them. The culture of the colonial elite was something to be inculcated and partaken of, and the opportunity to interact with this very elite within their social circles, such as attending a viceregal ball in Shimla, was considered to be the highest privilege. It would become de rigueur for Indian princely families to have an establishment in the hill stations, but it was only towards the end of the colonial period that the hill stations opened up to the Indian elite.

Indian princes were required to take permission from the colonial government through their British resident to purchase a property in hill stations. The colonial authorities would sidestep princely applications to acquire a property in Shimla. Rejected applicants such as the nizam of Hyderabad⁴⁹ and the nawab of Bahawalpur would have to contend with setting up summer retreats in local hill stations such as Udhagamandalam and Palampur respectively. If this was the fate of applications from the larger princely states, the smaller hill states did not stand a

chance. In 1916, Rana Heera Singh of Dharni, a little hill state located not more than 30 kilometres from Shimla, sought permission from the superintendent of the hill states, Colonel P.S.M. Barton, to purchase property within the municipal limits of Shimla. When this application was forwarded to the chief secretary of the Punjab government, his application was rejected on the grounds that 'having regard to the small revenue (of Rs 10,000 only) of the Dharni State and the proximity of the headquarters of the State to Simla, the Lieutenant Governor sees no reason for the Chief to have a house in Simla.'⁵⁰

The colonial authorities considered Indian princes, along with their vast entourage, an intrusion, a contagion to their European preserves. 'Every purchase of a house by a native gentleman with intention of residing in it or reserving it as private residence for the occasional use of himself or his friends helps to diminish the number of houses available for officers who are obliged to reside in Simla on duty.'⁵¹ The fear of contagion from the presence of Indians came to be played out through the colonial obsession with sanitation. Taking the metaphor of contagion too literally, the municipality commissioned a sanitary report that noted:

'The influx of such numbers coming from Native States opens the door for the introduction of infectious disease, but as this applies to natives

ABOVE: An archival photo of a colonial dignitary's wife is carried in a rickshaw handled by four Indian bearers in monogrammed uniform in Shimla, late 19th century [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



Manorville in Shimla, presently a guesthouse of the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), has undergone transformation like the former Viceregal Lodge. It was built in the early 20th century by a minor branch of the ruling family of Kapurthala, until a scion of the family, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, the first health minister of independent India, donated it to AIIMS, the post-Independence institution she helped set up





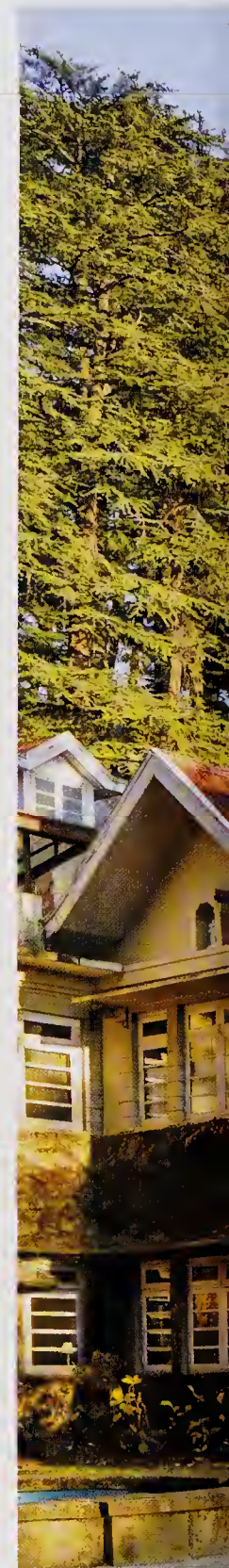
coming to Simla from all parts of India only adds to an existing danger . . . minor difficulties arise owing to complaints of neighbours as to the habits of the menial following of Rajahs. These menial followers are not accustomed to being subjected to the sanitary discipline enforced in Simla.⁵²

TRANSFORMATION IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

However, the colonists could stem the entry of princely and wealthy Indians into their most exclusive hill stations for only that long. By the turn of the 20th century, their grip on these hill stations, along with that on India in general, began to loosen. Increasingly, the colonists would spend their holidays in Britain rather than the hill stations (with the exception of the duration of the two World Wars), and the Indian upper class could now aspire to a home or holiday in the hill stations.⁵³ In Shimla, apart from Indian princes, prosperous professionals from nearby regions such as Punjab began to make their presence felt, ready to take over from the colonists by the end of the Second World War. Existing heritage properties in Shimla such as Woodville Palace and Sunnymead bear witness to this transformation. Like Chapslee, Woodville Palace passed through a series of colonial owners into the hands of the princely family of the hill state of Jubbal in 1926.⁵⁴ The original building was torn down and replaced with

the present structure in 1938. Sunnymead is a quaint throwback to the large European cottages that once populated the European part of Shimla. It was built at the turn of the 20th century by an Indian government official called Jawahar Kishan Kitchlu.⁵⁵ It would appear that Kitchlu belonged to the Anglicised class of Kashmiri pandits and had a government position favourable enough to enable him to have a European home in Shimla.

‘The hill stations, founded entirely for British purposes, became one of the most powerful symbols of the separation of the British from the Indians and one of the most significant indicators of the Britishness of Anglo-Indians: a concrete sign of the British inability to acclimatise’.⁵⁶ It would almost seem that such settlements in the western Himalaya, and indeed other Indian highlands, would disintegrate with the departure of the British in India, rooted as they seemed to be in their original context, as problematic as it was.⁵⁷ However, as the examples of the former viceregal properties in Shimla–Mashobra reveal, as discussed in the two subsequent chapters, these aloof sites have been transformed into places of engagement: the former Viceregal Lodge, presently the Indian Institute of Advanced Study in Shimla, as an institute committed to the cause of engaged research, and The Retreat in Mashobra as a site of local engagement by the head of the republican state of India.





FACING PAGE: Sunnymead. This charming European cottage was in fact built by an Indian owner at the turn of the 20th century

ABOVE: Woodville Palace, presently a heritage hotel, passed into Indian princely possession in 1926 and was rebuilt in 1938

1. In this chapter, the term British colonists is used to refer to the British residents of India during the colonial period even though not all of them were directly engaged in the colonial project.
2. *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangir or Memoirs of Jahangir*, ed. Henry Beveridge, trans. Alexander Rogers, 2nd edition (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1968), 143.
3. Especially Dane Kennedy and Judith T. Kenny, but also Pamela Kanwar and Queeny Pradhan. Dane Kennedy, *Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Judith T. Kenny, 'Climate, Race and Imperial Authority: The British Hill Station in India in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, 4 (December 1996), 694–714; Pamela Kanwar, *Imperial Simla: The Political Culture of the Raj*, 2nd edition (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014); Queeny Pradhan, 'Empire in the Hills: The Making of Hill Stations in Colonial India', *Studies in History* 23,1 (2007), 33–91.
4. As quoted in Kenny, 700.
5. As quoted in Indira Ghose(ed.), *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth Century India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 225.
6. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains*..., 19–38.
7. Ibid.
8. Hon. Emily Eden, *Up the Country: Letters Written to her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India*, new edition (London: Richard Bentley, 1867), 129.
9. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains*..., 63–87.
10. A major local attraction for the colonial society of Shimla was the annual Sipi fair at Mashobra, which is discussed in the fourth chapter in the colonial and recent context.
11. As quoted in Kyle Gardner, 'Ready Materials for Another World: Security and the Hindustan-Tibet Road in the 19th Century Northwestern Himalaya', *Himalaya: The Journal for the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 33, 1 (March 2014), 71.
12. Yashaswini Chandra, 'Sacred Change: Material Heritage and Cultural Negotiation in the Western Himalayas', PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, 2011, chapter 1.
13. Jogishwar Singh, *Banks, Gods and Government: Institutional and Informal Credit Structure in a Remote and Tribal Indian District, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, 1960–85* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1989), 21–22.
14. Kanwar, *Imperial Simla*..., 14.
15. Progress Report from Lieutenant Briggs to the Secretary of the Forest Department dated 30–06–1851, proceeding no. 229, foreign correspondence, Foreign Department, 1851, National Archives of India (NAI).
16. Correspondence between Lieutenant Dawson, Superintendent of the Hill Roads, and the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated 25–03–1853, proceedings no. 232–34, Foreign Department, NAI.
17. Chandra, 'Sacred Change...' chapter 1.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Gardner, 'Ready Materials...', 75–78.
21. H. Cleghorn, Report upon the Forests of the Punjab and the Western Himalaya, reprint (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 2001), 25.
22. Arik Moran, 'From Mountain Trade to Jungle Politics: The Transformation of Kingship in Bushahr, 1815–1914', *The Indian Economic and Social Review*, XL, 2 (2007), 159.
23. Archival records such as 'Evaluation of Forests in Jubal', proceeding no. 5–8, part A, and 'Forest, Revenue and Agricultural Department and Evaluation of Forest in Keonthal', proceeding no. 70, part A, Forest, Revenue and Agricultural Department, NAI.
24. Moran, 'From Mountain Trade...', 160.
25. Pradhan, 'Empire in the Hills...', 35.
26. Tea: Correspondence between Major Edward Lake, Superintendent of Hill States, and Mr R.P. Inkins dated 4 February 1857, Preliminary Reports regarding Tea Cultivation in the District: 1857, Hill States Agency Papers, Himachal Pradesh State Archives (HPSA). Western Himalayan trade: as discussed in previous section. Palampur's position in the colonial engagement with the western Himalayas is exemplified by the romantic figure of Robert Shaw, who was the first European to visit the Central Asian city of Kashgar, and explored the mountainous trail from Leh to Kashgar and Yarkand. Along with his brother-in-law, John Younghusband, he started tea plantations in Palampur in the 1850s. In the 1860, an important figure, the viceroy Lord Elgin experimented with tea in the Kangra region. He set up a private tea house, McLeodganj Tea House, in the eponymous part of Dharamshala.
27. Penelope Chetwode, *Kulu: The End of the Habitable World* (London: John Murray, 1972), 127–49. See n. 57.
28. For class in colonial society, see Pat Barr, *The Memsahibs: The Women of Victorian India* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1976), 145–47; P.J. Marshall, 'British Society in India under the East India Company', *Modern Asian Studies* 31, 1 (1997): 89–108; Nayantara Pothan, *Glittering Decades* (New Delhi: Viking/Penguin, 2012).
29. J. Fitzgibbon-Lee, *Guide to Dharamshala and the Kangra Valley* (Lahore, 1899), 14.
30. Narendra Singh Sarila, *Once a Prince of Sarila: Of Palaces and Elephant Rides, of Nehru and Mountbatten* (New York: IB Taurus, 2008), 78, Kennedy, 207.

31. As quoted in Kanwar, *Imperial Simla...*, 38.
32. For the urban development of Shimla in the colonial period, refer to the definitive study by Kanwar.
33. Sarila, *Once a Prince of Sarila...*, 78. Emphasis mine.
34. It is worth noting that it was the American, rather than the English varieties of such fruits that were introduced into the region. During the tenure of Edward Charles Buck as the secretary of the Revenue and Agriculture Department, wide-scale experimentation with fruit was conducted in the western Himalayas, centred on the Kullu and Shimla districts. The soil and climatic conditions of these areas were compared favourably with those in California. Thus, grafts and seeds from America were transported and widely distributed in this region, along with booklets in Urdu, Hindi and English to encourage fruit cultivation amongst the local *zamindars*, or landowners. 'Note on Fruit Cultivation in Simla and Kulu Districts', bundle no. 152, s. no. 1671, HPSA.
35. For more on this subject, refer to Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 39–62.
36. Jan Morris with Simon Winchester, *Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 50. With reference to the term 'Anglo-Indian', note that until the First World War, the British in India referred to themselves as such. Until the First World War, a person of mixed Indian and European lineage was referred to as Eurasian.
37. Philip Davies, *Splendours of the Raj* (New Delhi: Dass Media, 1985), 113–17.
38. As quoted in Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 105.
39. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 111–12.
40. As compared by E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c. 1800–1947* (Cambridge: Polity Press), 99–102.
41. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 99–100.
42. As quoted in Margaret MacMillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 197.
43. 'Annadale Luncheon', 'Eton Dinner at Viceregal Lodge' and 'Viceroy's Staff Dace at Viceregal Lodge', Invitations Section, 1939, Rashtrapati Bhavan Records Room.
44. 'Viceroy's Staff Dance at Viceregal Lodge'.
45. Sara Jeanette Duncan, *On the Other Side of the Latch* (London: Methuen & Co, 1901), 8–9.
46. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 175–97.
47. Correspondence from A.B. Kettlewell, Superintendent Hill States, Simla, to Mr M.W. Fenton, Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, dated 16 September 1911, Punjab Hills Political Agency, permanent file no. E/8-50 of 1913, part II, NAI.
48. Kanwar, *Imperial Simla...*, 1–2; Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 198.
49. *Ibid.*, 99.
50. Written correspondence from J.P. Thompson, Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab to Superintendent of Hill States, Punjab Hill States Residency Papers, no. 79, 1916, NAI.
51. Sanitary Report on the visit of Chiefs and Native Princes to Simla, Simla Municipality Records, bundle no. 8, s. no. 1913, HPSA.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Kennedy, *Magic Mountains...*, 202–22.
54. Information booklet about Woodville Palace.
55. Personal communication with Madhavi Bhatia.
56. Collingham, 86. See no. 36 for use of the term 'Anglo-Indian'.
57. In the context of this study of general colonial aloofness in the hill stations in the western Himalaya, mention is warranted of those few, but significant instances of British colonists assimilating in the region. The British orchard farmers of the Kullu valley represented such a sub-culture. This small community in fact had an effect on the area which lasts to date. Most of these families either settled (even marrying locals) or might have settled in the area. Unfortunately, this interesting community is yet to be studied in detail (Chetwode, 127–49).
58. Even more seminal was an individual of American origin, Samuel Evan/Satyananda Stokes, who settled in the Kotgarh–Thanedar area. Although he represented a divergent worldview in comparison with the British colonists, he is worth mentioning as a product of Anglo-American culture who challenged the prevalent notions of racial difference and distance in India. Stokes 'merged and effaced himself with the Indians in the Shimla hills', to paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi's description of him; led the campaign against *begar* in the western Himalaya; and rose to be a prominent freedom fighter with the Indian National Congress (Asha Sharma and Nandini Sharma, *An American in Khadi: The Definitive Biography of Satyanand Stokes*, new edition, Indiana University Press, 2008).
59. It can be argued that some of the smaller hill stations lost their bearings at least briefly with the departure of the colonists. Dharamshala is an example of a small hill station that went into decline before it revived and found new meaning with the establishment of the Tibetan Government in Exile in McLeodganj in 1959.



CHAPTER III

THE PALACE AND THE RETREAT

Deepak Gahlowt

At Independence, the Government of India inherited two very different viceregal homes in the Shimla Hills. On Observatory Hill stood the former Viceregal Lodge that became Rashtrapati Niwas and now houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), while The Retreat at Mashobra became the most remote and peaceful residence of the President of India.

The former Viceregal Lodge, now one of Shimla's biggest tourist attractions, is a building unique in the annals of British Indian architecture. Constructed in the 1880s in an amalgam of styles from Elizabethan and Scottish baronial to Gothic, it also incorporates Indian adaptation. Importantly, despite its 'pseudo-Elizabethan'¹ exterior, it employed the most modern technology that the world of that time had to offer. Grand and imposing, a symbol in stone and mortar of the power of the Raj and the man who stood at its head, it was intended not only to inspire awe in the general population but to enhance the viceroy's comfort in his administrative and social roles.

The contrast with the cottage-like Retreat with its understated interiors could hardly be greater. While the Niwas was palatial, The Retreat was modest and unassuming. One was luxurious and the other had only the basics. While the Niwas occupied the most prominent position in the summer capital, The Retreat was a private home secluded in the dense forest of a quiet suburb.

This contrast reflects the different roles of the viceroy in each location. While the Viceregal Lodge was all power, pomp and circumstance, in short the viceroy at work, The Retreat was about the viceroy at rest and at leisure, away from the summer capital, able to enjoy simple pleasures and family life. In this chapter we consider both these remarkable residences.

The 'pseudo-Elizabethan' exterior of the former Viceregal Lodge, now Rashtrapati Niwas, home to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study



SUMMER CAPITAL AND A NEW RESIDENCE AT SHIMLA

The tradition of major public works in Shimla began as far back as 1827 when Lord Amherst became the first governor-general to visit the hill station.² He commanded a road be built around Mount Jakhu, Shimla's highest point, and also the construction of a bridge of pines across a deep ravine and a water storage tank. This tradition of public works was strengthened by the establishment of a municipality in 1850.³ Then in 1856, Dalhousie's new road from Kalka at the foot of the hills provided access to bullock carts for goods, and horse-drawn carriages for passengers and mail. Once declared British India's summer capital in 1864, growth continued apace, but public works never included a permanent residence for the viceroy.

Lord and Lady Amherst had stayed at Kennedy House, the first house to be built in Shimla, as the guest of its owner James Pratt Kennedy, the political department's assistant agent in the hill states.⁴ After their visit, Bentinck Castle, Auckland House and Peterhof, as well as some other houses, served as residences of the governors-general and viceroys for brief durations. Although they were situated to provide superb views of the landscape, they were all cramped compared with the spacious interiors of Kolkata's Government House.

Lord Lytton (1876–80) finally initiated steps to construct a permanent residence despite knowing that the government in London would be reluctant to foot the bill. Captain Cole, the architect and engineer of the Shimla Imperial Circle of the PWD, was asked to prepare designs. However, little progress was made and Lytton's successor, Lord Ripon, chose not to pursue the scheme.⁵



ABOVE: Peterhof, the hill station villa that was the residence of seven viceroys between 1862 and 1888, when the Viceregal Lodge was completed [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

BELOW: The Ripon hospital that so impressed Lord Dufferin that he chose its architect, Henry Irwin, to design the new Viceregal Lodge [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

It was left to Lord Dufferin (1884–88) to take up the cause and revive Lytton's plan for a residence on Observatory Hill. Inaugurating Shimla's Gothic-style Ripon Hospital, he was so impressed with the building that he invited its architect, Henry Irwin, to take on the task of designing the new Viceregal Lodge. This prestigious assignment helped

to build Irwin's reputation and he subsequently became known for his work in the very different Indo-Saracenic style, designing public buildings across Central and South India. One of his most notable commissions was the Amba Palace, the residence of the maharaja of Mysore.

In Shimla, Irwin was working with a viceroy who considered the new residence a project that was very much his own. Dufferin himself suggested the general plan and wanted the Lodge designed exactly like an English house. Here Irwin disagreed, insisting that although the internal arrangements would be similar to an English house, there should be one major Indian adaptation—verandahs. He won the day, and verandahs, though not continuous, and interspersed with bay windows with deep projections, were provided on three sides of the building with the aim of giving the occupants access to outside space.

When construction began in 1886 Dufferin, who had continued to provide constant input on the details of his new residence, visited the site almost every morning and evening whenever he was in Shimla, keeping the PWD staff on their toes. 1886 was also the year that income tax was levied in India for the first time and it was rumoured the step was taken deliberately to raise funds for the new residence.⁶

Lady Dufferin, as enthusiastic about the project as her husband, described a typical scene at the construction site, 'Stones and stone cutters and sheds and scaffolding occupy the whole front, the road is like a mountain torrent, and the boilers for the electric machine are being dragged up the hills.'⁷ The young women labourers impressed her, as adorned with necklaces, bracelets and earrings, they carried large basins of mortar on their heads, walking 'with the carriage of empresses', and seeming as much at ease on the top of the roof as on the ground floor.⁸

As the building approached completion she wrote, 'I do want to live there very much, for the house is beautiful and the views from it are quite splendid. Simla scenery is seen to a greater advantage from it than any other place. . . . One could have spent hours at the window of my

unfinished boudoir, looking on the plains in the distance, with the great river flowing through them. . . .'⁹

As Lady Dufferin indicates, a primary concern was to provide such views to the south, where the main entrance was placed, as well as views of the snow peaks to the north.

The construction proceeded at a furious pace. The Lodge was built and fitted out within two years, an extraordinary achievement even by today's standards. As Dufferin had anticipated, he and his wife could only enjoy it for a few brief months, moving in on 23 July 1888 during their final summer in India. However, both he and Henry Irwin left their names displayed in huge letters on the building's exterior, as if the Lodge stood as their epitaph.

THE VICEREGAL LODGE

Three storeys high and masonry-clad, with large glazed windows and open balconies supported by pillars shaped from the same local green-grey stone used in the window jambs and lintels, the Viceregal Lodge stands in some 90 acres of grounds. Its central tower with its flagstaff is visible from miles away. On the south-western corner is a smaller, octagonal tower surmounted by a lead shingle dome and a weather vane.

The main portion of the building stands on flat ground and was designed in the form of three structural bays extending from east to west that can be imagined as an oblong divided into three strips across its length. Walking in from the south lawns, a main entry porch leads to the triple-height entrance hall with a grand staircase to the right. On the left is what was once the morning room (a sitting room for daylight hours) and beyond that a spacious drawing room. Also the ground floor of the octagonal tower with a spiral staircase leading to the viceregal apartments above.

The entrance hall leads directly to the central bay occupied by a teak-panelled gallery. This too is open to the third floor, where a glazed ceiling lets in sunlight. Despite being narrow in proportion to its length, being 87 feet



SIR EDWARD BUCK,
MR. S. HARVEY JAMES.

SIR ANTHONY MACDONNELL,
SIR H. M. DE RAND.

SIR DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE,
GENERAL SIR E. COLLEN.

LORD WILLIAM BERESFORD,
GENERAL R. C. B. PEMBERTON.



SIR CHARLES ATCHISON.

SIR ANDREW SCOTLE.

THE EARL OF DUFFERIN.

GENERAL SIR GEORGE CHESNEY.

SIR JAMES WESTLAND.

GENERAL SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS.

SIR CHARLES ELLIOTT.

LORD DUFFERIN'S COUNCIL AND SECRETARIES—1888.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: An early photo showing the trees in the arches to stop them from spreading; Lord Dufferin with his council; an early photograph of the Viceregal Lodge, showing its two entrance porches, and the tower before it was heightened by Lord Curzon; and the Viceregal Lodge from the south, constructed and fitted out within two years [Source for all photos: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

long and merely 18 feet wide, it is nonetheless impressive. Originally a line of stone pillars separated the entrance hall from the gallery, but these were later removed.

The ballroom, with its bandstand, is at the gallery's western end and now houses the library of the IIAS. The ballroom and the drawing room of the first bay were designed as one united whole, and are together 130 feet long and spread across the entire width of the building, with windows opening on three sides to the south, west and north. This is by far the grandest of the interior spaces.

Its appearance in 1888 can be judged from Lady Dufferin's description: 'The corridor [gallery] opens into the ballroom with a large arch; and a similar arch at one end of the big drawing room which is a lovely room furnished with gold and brown silks, and with large bow-windows, and a small round tower recess on it. Sitting in it, you look down the ballroom, the colouring of which is a lighter yellow . . . outside the dancing space there is plenty of room for sitting, as the wall is much broken up into pillars, leaving a sort of gallery around it.'¹⁰

Dancers in the ballroom could proceed directly to the state dining room in the third or rear bay, opening onto the terraced grounds to the north and views of the snows. Today, this too forms part of the IIAS library, but high on one teak-panelled wall the names of the viceroys and governors-general are still in place although their coats of arms were removed after Independence. The dining room was also accessed directly from the main gallery, while food was carried in through a door on its east wall, which led to a preparation room. This in turn was connected to the main kitchens on the lower floors in what was known as the 'East Wing', which is further discussed later.

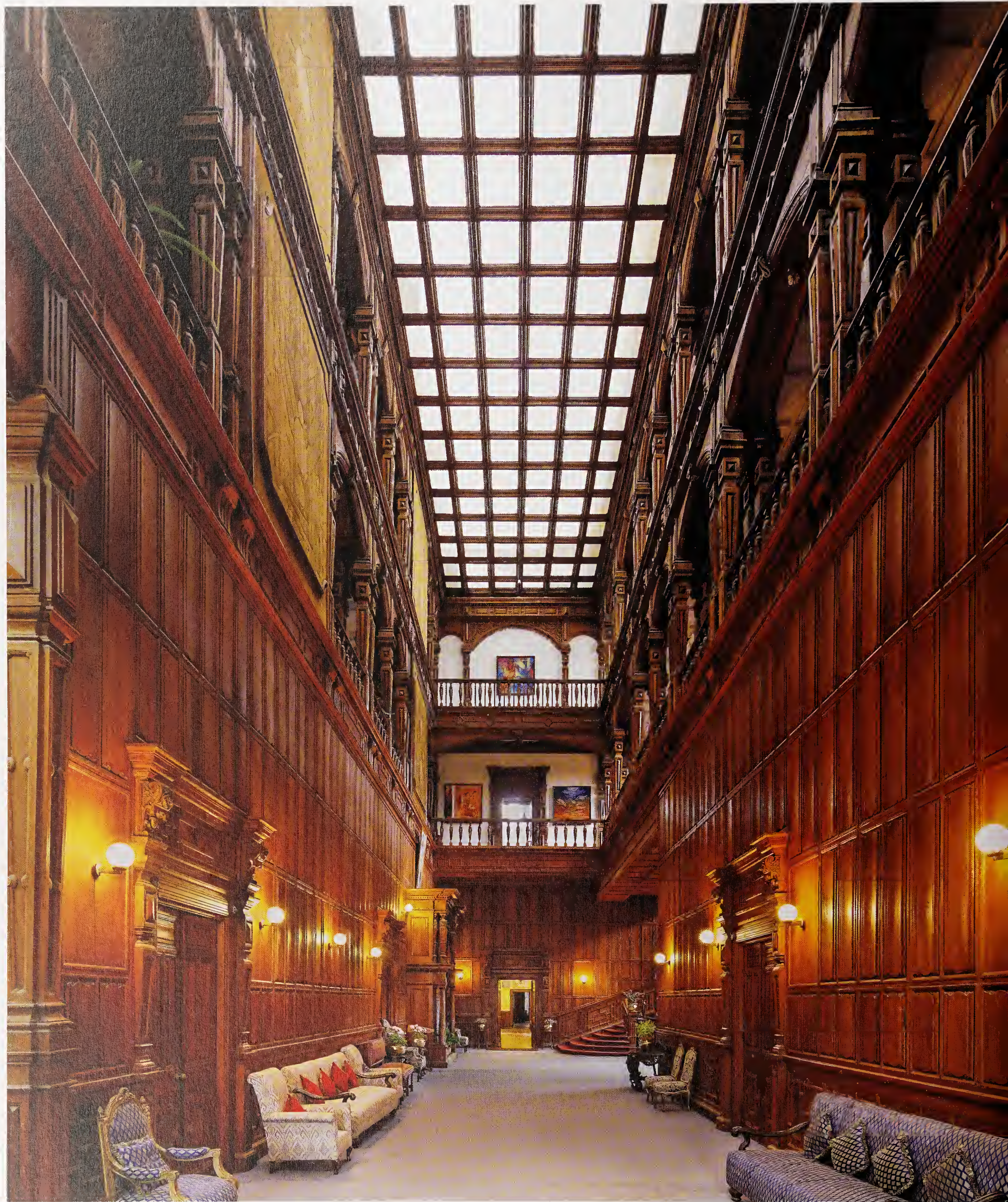
The rooms of the first bay to the right of the entrance hall are accessed by a corridor leading from the east end of the gallery. The original purpose of the first room is unclear from the plans, but the second was the billiards room and the third the ADCs' room, now the photo-gallery. These two were interconnected to give diversion to the young officers.¹¹



ABOVE: The octagonal tower to the south-west, with its fish-scale style lead shingle dome surmounted by a weather vane

RIGHT: Three storeys high, the building has large glazed windows and pillars of local grey-green stone









ABOVE: A view of the vicereine's bedroom in the former viceregal suites of the first floor

RIGHT: The dining room in former times, showing the ancestral shields of the viceroys and governors-general [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

PREVIOUS PAGE: To the left, the triple-height gallery, impressive despite being rather narrow in proportion to its length. A glazed skylight admits daylight from above. To the right, the grand teak staircase leading from the entrance hall to the third floor



THE UPPER FLOORS

The entrance hall's imposing teak staircase with wide treads and risers, solid carved wooden balusters and handrails on one side and raised wood panelling on the other, led from the right of the main entrance to the viceregal suites on the first floor. Facing south and west these consisted of a council room, the viceroy's study and the vicereine's boudoir, or private sitting room, and then the bedrooms and dressing, wardrobe and bathrooms. The couple's room were interconnected in accordance with Lady Dufferin's wish. Also at her suggestion a breakfast room was provided in the octagonal tower.¹²

The second storey accommodated guest rooms. The floors of the upper storeys are covered with wooden planks above and below. The vacant space in between was filled as insulation with newspapers of the day. This cheap and effective measure was discovered when my colleagues and I took up the floorboards during restoration work in the 1990s. The newspapers were perfectly preserved and we carefully replaced them as we found them—surely a most secure form of library. Select rooms have ceilings of Kashmir design, with intricate geometric patterns formed of wood.

The floors of balconies, above the verandahs that Irwin had insisted on, were set with Hayward's Semi-Prism glass, a

very novel step. The small prisms reflected light deep into the rooms, but the joints between were and are prone to rainwater seeping through.

From the corridor that leads to the former ADCs' room, a passageway leads towards the rear of the building. Here is a staircase to the top of the tower that still houses two floors of water storage tanks providing water to the bathrooms and kitchens as well as reserves in case of fire. Fire was a major concern, both here and at The Retreat. Pressure hoses and other equipment were provided at various points within the Viceregal Lodge. Outside, the swimming pool doubled as a fire-fighting resource. Conservation of water was also carefully planned. Every drop of rainwater landing on the roofs was channelled into two underground water tanks, one under the south lawns and one to the north. Together these hold 230,000 litres.¹³

The roofing systems of the Lodge consist of wood beams and joists for usable floors, and wooden trusses on the top with corrugated galvanised iron sheeting overlaid with wooden purlins to hold in place Mangalore-design roof tiles so that the sheets are hidden. Lead flushing was laid at joints between the roof and gutters to prevent water from seeping into walls. However, during the 1990s restoration work this was found to be missing, presumably stolen, and replaced with an alternative with a less attractive resale value.



A view of the roof from the central tower showing the Mangalore-style tiles, gables and garden below





An early view of the Viceregal Lodge, showing the main block built on level ground, and the East or Service Wing, consisting of three floors cut into the side of the hill [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

BELOW STAIRS

The same passageway that gives access to the tower has another spiral staircase leading up to the rooms and down to the service area basements of the East Wing. This wing, an innovative feature, was not a true basement as it consisted of three floors cut into the side of the hill, with retaining walls and buttresses to provide stability and drains to release water pressure from the slopes. These floors are constructed using the traditional technique of lime concrete vaults, in all probability to save cost and provide a floor capable of taking heavier loads. The walls were covered with glazed tiles or paint.

This wing accommodated the kitchens and two outside dumbwaiters that were used to carry food up to the level of the preparation room. But it was far from being just devoted to culinary matters, and the original use of the rooms indicates the large number and variety of staff. Above the service areas were the apartments of the comptroller and assistant comptroller of the president's household. Below, rooms were provided for the abdar, butlers and cooks. There was a steward's sitting room with its own dining room, a lounge for off-duty servants and also a tiffin room. Separate spaces were also provided for tea boiling, a soda-water factory, flower arranging, silver and china, linen, blankets, an invitation room and even a small jail room with heavy metal bars. There were also the wine cellars, an ice store, coal stores, boilers and a fully-fledged laundry, with washing, drying and ironing rooms. To have a laundry within the main house and not in a separate building was a particular novelty. Provisions were brought into the building from the grounds by a service entry at the lowest portion of the wing.

MODERN AMENITIES

The building was provided with every single conceivable comfort and facility that was available at the time. The first demonstration of electric light in India was at Kolkata on 24 July 1879 by P.W. Fleury & Co.¹⁴ The new invention was adopted for the Viceregal Lodge and on 8 August 1888, the house, grounds and approaches were brilliantly illuminated

by electric light for the first time. Lady Dufferin greatly enjoyed these arrangements. As she wrote, 'Putting out of the lamps is so simple that it is quite a pleasure to go around one's room touching a button here and there, and to experiment with various amounts of light.'¹⁵

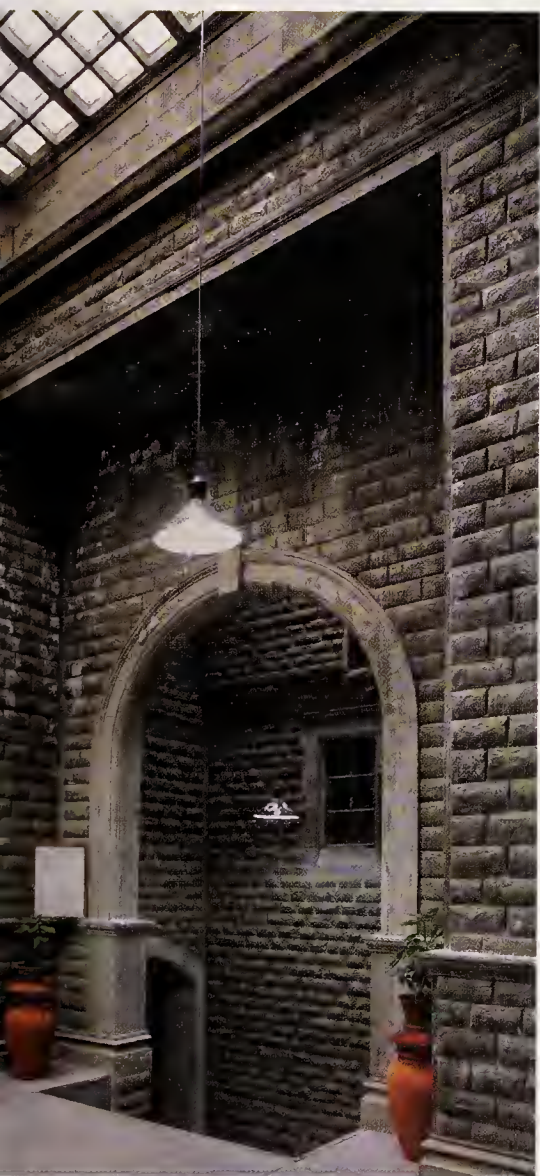
There were altogether about 1,000 lamps, the majority of 16 candle-power, and the generators were situated near the main entrance gate and close to the stable block. When electricity came to Shimla town, this shed was converted into a transformer room, with the offices of the superintendent of the Viceregal Lodge on the upper floor.

A council chamber for the Imperial Legislative Council was added in 1916–17 as a perpendicular extension on the north face of the building, which until then was essentially east to west in alignment.¹⁶ It was roofed with what must be among the first uses of reinforced cement concrete slabs supported on steel joints and built-up sections. The double height council chamber could accommodate up to 100 members along with a press and spectators' gallery on a mezzanine that overlooked the chamber. Vehicles could drive up to the portico on the north through the service grounds, and from within the building it was accessed from the dining room or the ballroom via a courtyard, roofed with glass bricks, and a set of steps.

A Public Entry Building, also with a reinforced concrete roof and carefully designed in a style consistent with the original building was added in 1927 by Lord Irwin. This addition extended the main building to the east and contained cloakrooms and offices.¹⁷

The main entrance to the estate was through a half-timbered gatehouse, above which were the stables, now converted into a guesthouse for visiting scholars. On the same level as the main building and set in its own lawns was the ADCs' house, now also a guesthouse, built on the site of the original house known as the Observatory. Other buildings included an indoor tennis court, a chapel and residences for other officers and staff in the viceroy's service.





FACING PAGE: A view of the Public Entry Building added in 1927 by Lord Irwin

LEFT: A court covered with glass bricks connects the state dining room to the council chamber via steps through the arched gateway on the right

ABOVE: The landscaped terraces added by Lord and Lady Minto in 1908, the lower of which until recent years accommodated tennis courts



A set of landscaped stone terraces was added during the time of Lord and Lady Minto in 1908.¹⁸ Still in place are a sundial and a map etched on a brass plate showing the major peaks visible from Shimla. Much of the lower part of the estate is wooded with deodar cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) and other trees.

INTERIORS FIT FOR A KING

The original furnishings, including much of the furniture, was ordered from Messrs Maple and Co.¹⁹ One of the largest and most successful British furniture retailers and cabinet-makers in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, they were well-known for fine quality and craftsmanship in styles such as Hepplewhite and Chippendale and also for their Arts and Crafts furniture. The completion report of the Public Works Department mentions that the furniture was made out of ash and walnut, and many items for the dining room and the viceroy and his wife's private apartments were manufactured locally at a workshop in Shimla 'by Punjab carpenters whose work was excellent'.²⁰

The cornices were covered with Tynecastle tapestry, an embossed leather-like material compound of canvas and paste, which could be both given the appearance of age

and tinted and gilded. For the curtains satin and figured brocatelle fabric with designs in high relief was selected. Furniture was upholstered with silk, velvet and rich chenille tapestry, a type of very soft, fuzzy fabric made from tufts of coloured wool lengths.

The carpets were of Victoria Axminster, much sought-after by Europe's wealthy aristocrats for use in their country homes. Japanese wallpaper was hung in the ballroom. In other areas, the wallpaper used was lincrusta, heralded as the first washable wall covering when it came on the market in 1877. Subsequently it became so popular that it had a wide range of clients from royalty to railway companies.

The Dufferins' taste, it has to be said, did not suit many of their successors, with Edwina Mountbatten's comments being the most damning. She wrote in her diary, 'House hideous. Bogus English Baronial. Hollywood's idea of Viceregal Lodge'.²¹ Lord Curzon (1899–1905) was another who was profoundly unimpressed by what he found, although not necessarily for the same reasons. He insisted on increasing the height of the central tower. Indoors, he replaced the lincrusta and other paper ornamentation with damask silks and corrected errors in the coats of arms of the governors-general.



The Swedish explorer, Dr Sven Hedin, who visited Shimla in 1906 and was the guest of the viceroy, Lord Minto, wrote an account of the building as it was immediately after Curzon's time. From the upper floor where he stayed, he looked down upon scarlet-clad footmen gliding noiselessly up and down the stairs. While the ballroom was decorated in white and gold, swords and arms were hung on the walls of the gallery.²² The imprint of these arms still remains on the now empty walls.

In contrast to this lavishness, Mashobra provided 'an ideal retreat from the despotism of dispatch boxes'.²³ The relative capital costs for both properties, estimated by the government in a report dated 1941, provide a clear illustration of the disparity in scale between the two. The cost of the Viceregal Lodge was estimated at about Rs 33,00,000²⁴ and that of The Retreat a mere Rs 1,00,000.

A HOME IN THE FOREST

Some 10 kilometers distant from Shimla, The Retreat stands in 115 acres of grounds at an altitude of 2,200 metres

on a ridge 450 metres higher than Viceregal Lodge. It is reached from the Shimla-Kinnaur Road near the village of Charabra, site of Wildflower Hall, once the residence of Lord Kitchener, commander-in-chief of the British Indian army. The nearby Kalyani helipad also provides easy access. More importantly, because of it, neither the locals nor visitors face any inconveniences, such as the closure of roads, when the president and his guests visit the property during the peak tourist season.

The tarmac driveway, constructed after Independence, snakes through forest before reaching the main gate below the lawns and climbing to the house. A steep footpath from near the top of the drive remains the only access to the nearby Mashobra bazaar. It leads down past staff quarters and offices. Here too, were the stables and the rickshaw shed, dating from the days when the only way to reach The Retreat was on foot, on horseback or by rickshaw.

The house itself faces south-east, looking out over terraced gardens to a forested hillside. As a sign of the modernity that came late to The Retreat, although the Viceregal

Interior views of the Viceregal Lodge. The opulent drawing room adjoining the ballroom (centre) and the gallery (above left) with the richly decorated linocrusta wallpaper favoured by the Dufferins, and another (above right) after this had been replaced by teak panelling with rows of blackbuck heads adorning the walls [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

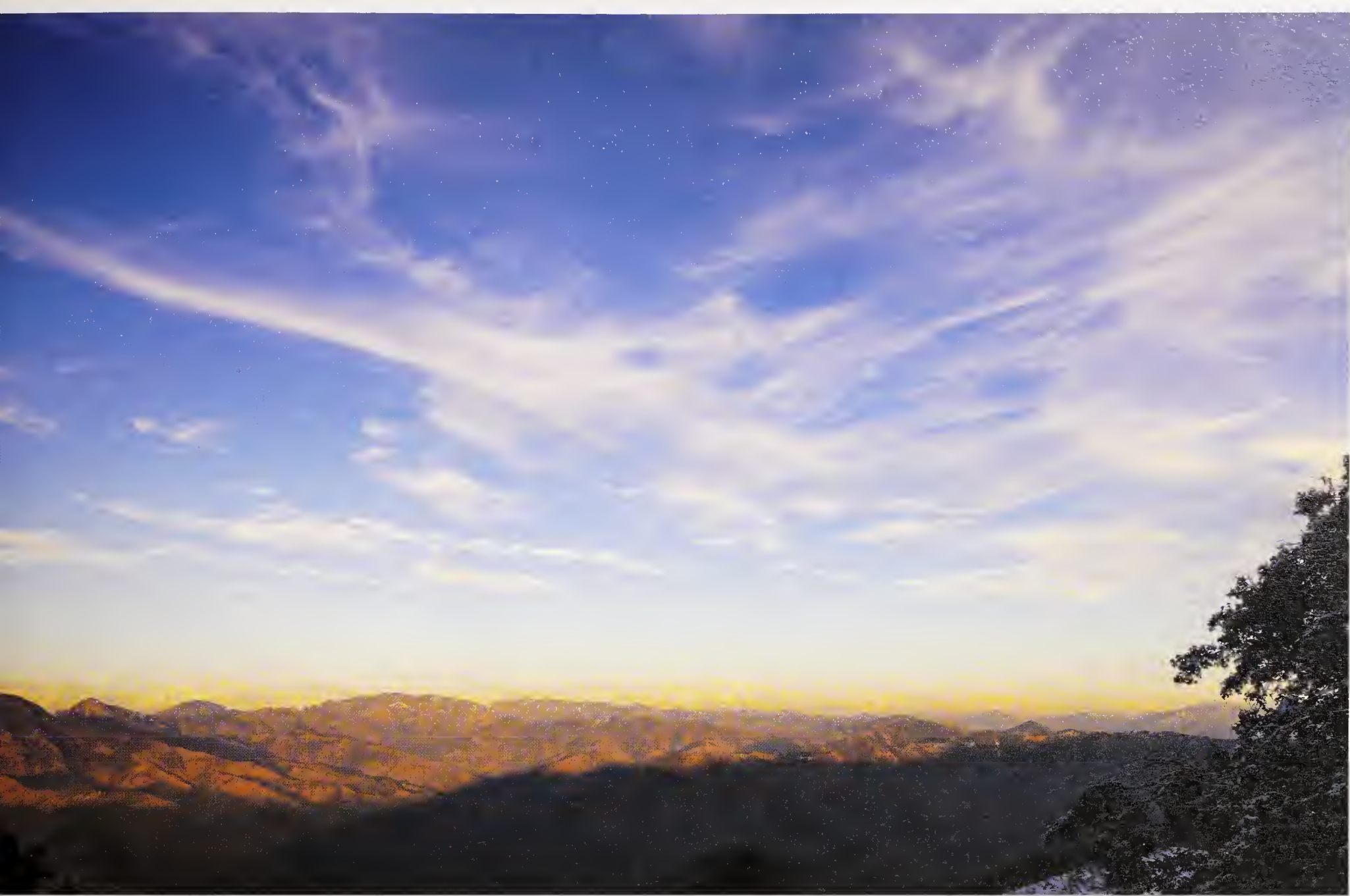


The Retreat as seen from the presidential helicopter, just before arrival at the Kalyani helipad

Lodge's gardens were illuminated by electric light in 1888, it was over a century later, during the term of President Abdul Kalam, that lights were introduced to the gardens of The Retreat, until then reliant on moonlight.²⁵

The lower terrace is just large enough for a tennis court. The roller still remains, although lawns have now replaced the court. On the northern side the land slopes steeply down. Here are the kitchen gardens and, just visible from the house, the orchards. Across a wide valley towers Shali Peak (2,800 metres), with its famous Kali temple. The superb views stretch beyond Shali to the ranges of Kufri, to Indrasen, Papsura and to the Reo Purgil (6,800 metres), the highest peak in Himachal. On clear days snow peaks fill the horizon.

Mashobra, with its glorious views, was part of the Koti state, and the properties there were leased from the rana of Koti—The Retreat's lease costing Rs 2,825 a year.²⁶ The rana laid down in the terms of the lease that the roads through the estate should, in the interests of the local population, remain open to the public, that no trees could be cut down without his permission, and that no cattle should be slaughtered. The lease was originally made in favour of Lord William Hay when he was the deputy commissioner of Shimla. When Hay left India in 1862, it changed hands several times until it was purchased by Sir Edward Buck in 1881. By this time The Retreat was a double-storeyed house with attics above, although an early photograph indicates that a single-storeyed cottage originally stood on the spot.



The superb views from The Retreat

Buck found his new purchase in a pitiable state, the foundations giving way, and the interior walls ‘parting as under a pair of scissors’ and about to fall over the mountainside.²⁷ He had the rubble foundations replaced by strong stone masonry supported by abutment walls. The roof was underpinned by timber obtained from trees nearby and the building reshaped. A second entrance was opened, conservatories and a billiard room added, an unused attic converted into four attic rooms and an extra room added above the billiard room.

In 1896, Lord Elgin purchased The Retreat and it became the weekend residence of the viceroy. The Elgins repaired holes in the roof and loose floorboards and made other alterations.²⁸ However, The Retreat remains basically unchanged since the time when Buck rebuilt it in the *dhajji* style, the traditional form of construction found across much of Kashmir and Himachal that has proved time and time again to be earthquake resistant.

In the Shimla region, usually over stone foundations, a load-bearing masonry structure is built interspersed with wooden beams or a wooden frame with masonry infill walls. The walls are then plastered with mud and lime. Floors are made of wooden beams and panels, and roofs are also made of wood over which slates, tiles or iron sheets are laid. The Retreat’s roof too is of plain iron sheets, painted for protection against the weather. Some of these sheets have been replaced in the recent





ABOVE LEFT: An early view of The Retreat, Mashobra, showing it as a single-storey building [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

ABOVE: The eccentric sitting room that was originally a conservatory

LEFT: The spiral staircase that originally linked both floors of the conservatory



*The elegant drawing room at The Retreat. To the right of the fireplace is the cabinet containing The Retreat's collection of Jaipur ware.
Right: The Julius Feurich piano*



past with corrugated and later pre-coated galvanised iron sheeting. Sadly, the newer roofs leak more than the older ones. As at the Viceregal Lodge, rainwater from the roof is harvested and stored for use in the gardens.

TEA AND GREENERY

The Retreat is a building typical of 19th-century Himalayan hill stations. Its gables are decorated with carved wooden bargeboards, and a deep wooden verandah wraps around the south-eastern and south-western side of the house. The main entrance is from the verandah on the south-east.



It leads into a central corridor, just over 50 feet in length and 8 feet wide, on both sides of which are rooms. On the right as you enter is a space that is three rooms in one. The first is a drawing room that opens directly onto what was once a boudoir, while to the right it opens on to an eccentrically-shaped sitting room with a sloping ceiling and a narrow wooden spiral staircase leading to the floor above. The windows of this sitting room overlook both the garden and the snows. There are still three fireplaces, the boudoir's fireplace being as petite as could be expected for a ladies' private room, but the wall separating it from the drawing room has been removed.



ABOVE: The formal dining room, with doors opening on to the terrace outside

RIGHT: A pair of butlers from the presidential staff at The Retreat in Mashobra





The ADCs' room, formerly the morning room

The sitting room projects from the main building and has windows set at angles to one another to create internal space and increase natural lighting. A photograph from 1904 shows that this part of the house was earlier entirely glazed from roof to ground level, with at least one, and very likely two glazed doors opening to the garden. This solves the mystery of the conservatory, or conservatories added by the former owner Edward Buck that were still in place when Lord Elgin took over The Retreat and were described as extending from the ground to the first floor.²⁹ The spiral staircase still leads to an enclosed glazed balcony that would have been this first floor conservatory.

As a sitting room the ground floor room is eccentric, but it makes a very respectable conservatory, following as it does a popular Victorian design. The boudoir too, with its sloping ceiling, appears an extension of this space, separated from it only by fireplaces and chimney flues. Glazed conservatories were originally developed to protect plants from severe weather but by the end of the 19th century were also used for recreation, and of course taking tea. Immensely fashionable in Victorian Britain, the fashion came to India and here took a hill station avatar.

SIMPLE ELEGANCE

The sitting and drawing room are furnished with groups of chairs and low tables. Here too stands an upright Julius Feurich piano with brass candleholders, manufactured by one of the greatest piano companies of Leipzig. Prominently displayed in cabinets and emblazoned in nastalli script with the word '*Khushamadid*', or 'Welcome' are vases of Jaipur pottery with its typical blue glaze. The vanishing art of Jaipur pottery, manufactured from powdered quartz, multani mitti (Fuller's earth) and gum, was revived in the latter half of the 19th century under the patronage of the maharaja of Jaipur, and the vases date from this period.³⁰

Also on display are examples of The Retreat's sizeable collection of chinoiserie or Chinese ceramics, with their characteristic white and blue glaze and featuring

subjects such as human figures, landscapes and dragons. These had been popular luxury goods in the West from the Renaissance period and in the 18th century became a feature of many English homes and gardens. In the 19th century the fashion reached British India from London and many Indian princes, aristocrats and members of the new industrial and commercial elites also became collectors.³¹

Opposite the entrance to the drawing room is the ADCs' room that previously served as a morning room, and in the 1940s—before tobacco's link to cancer was established—as a smoking room. Like all the principal rooms, it has a large fireplace, and the walls are decorated with illustrations of different breeds of dog, the British being famous for their fondness for four-legged friends and most viceroys being no exception to this rule.

Throughout the house the furniture is decidedly elegant, but at the same time comfortable. Although some of The Retreat's older furniture has been removed, there is still enough to give a good impression of earlier tastes for Regency and Georgian era styles. Common elements include rosettes and masks with paw feet on legs of chairs and tables. Though mahogany was preferred, woods native to India such as rosewood, or shisham, were also commonly used. A Georgian style card table also throws light on indoor recreation at The Retreat.

After 1965 when the Rashtrapati Niwas was converted into the IAS, some furniture commissioned for the Viceregal Lodge also found its way here. Most important is a set of bulky, heavily carved Victorian-baronial style chairs produced by Messrs Maple & Co. in London. They were suitable for the grand and showy Viceregal Lodge but appear somewhat out of place at The Retreat.

As one proceeds along the central corridor, on the right is an open sitting area created by removing, some time in the 1930s, a wall of the earlier Garden Bedroom. The walls here carry photographs of the presidents of India. Opposite this area is the door to the hall that leads to the secondary entrance to the building and the staircase to



ABOVE: The staircase leading to the upper storeys

FACING PAGE TOP: A corner window, complete with window seats, in the presidential suite on the first floor

FACING PAGE BOTTOM: The wide balcony of the first floor can be a most attractive work space. Here, President Pranab Mukherjee holds an informal meeting with (from left to right) his press secretary, private secretary, one of his ADCs and his military secretary





The central corridor of the upper storey, with rooms arranged on either side

the upper floors. Further on are two bedrooms, one on each side. The corridor ends in a narrow lobby leading to a large, high-ceilinged and well-lit single-storey dining room that opens onto a terrace behind. This L-shaped terrace was renovated in 1939, the space below being used for storage and now housing the electrical panels.

A dining table that seats 26 takes up the central space. Around the dining room are a set of small rooms and partitions, miniatures of the arrangements at the Viceregal Lodge. They are the silver room, the butler's pantry, a staff dining room, the abdar's room, a linen room, and of course a scullery and two kitchen areas, so basic that they bring to mind the phrase 'camp kitchen' especially when compared with the massive kitchens and stores of the Viceregal Lodge's East Wing.

The old ranges for wood fires are still in place, the one item of practical luxury being a now derelict Aga, a heat storage cooker containing hot plates and ovens. Even now many British cooks regard the Aga as the ultimate in kitchen equipment. Other relics from the culinary past include hot cases and larders. Still tucked away are now valuable items of the green and white Star of India crockery similar to that on display in the Rashtrapati Bhavan kitchen museum in New Delhi.

Piped water for the kitchens and the rest of the house is provided from the Gumma and Chedwater-lifting scheme, and a reservoir tank has also been constructed near the Kalyani helipad.

THE UPPER STOREY

On the first floor, a wide balcony overlooks the lawns and, like the verandah below, wraps around the south-west side of the house. Inside, rooms are similarly provided on both sides of a central corridor. The corridors and rooms of both floors are hung with a profusion of pictures. Many of the older paintings and prints were collected with the purpose of recreating a British home in the hills, or at the very least providing constant reminders of the home country. Stags lock horns in a quintessential Scottish

landscape, and there are universally recognised emblems of Englishness such as the dome of St. Paul's and Salisbury Cathedral with its tall spire.

While the real Himalayan ranges lie outside, many images of them decorate the inner walls. Notable among them are a series of 19th-century prints by the Scottish artist, James Baillie Fraser, showing not just the mountains in all their majesty, but the indigenous architecture of the hills and assemblages of hill peoples, and in particular the cityscape of Rampur, the capital of the largest hill state of Bashahr. Fraser travelled extensively across the Himalaya with his brother William, who had been appointed as a political agent during the Anglo-Gurkha wars.

The current interiors also include a range of reproductions of paintings by the 20th century Russian artist, Nicholas Roerich, who was based in Naggar in Kangra district and whose art captures the sublime aspect of the Himalaya, emphasising the bright sunlight bouncing off the snow peaks.

As was to be expected, the two first-floor bedrooms facing each other at the front of the house were reserved for the vicereine and viceroy, and also had doorways opening directly onto the balcony. The spiral staircase from the drawing room on the ground floor leads to the old conservatory that is now a study area adjoining the former viceregal bedroom. A gallery, or enclosed balcony, once ran the length of the northern side of this floor, but at some stage a portion collapsed or was removed. An external cast-iron spiral staircase still provides an emergency exit from this gallery. Fire is always a risk in a wooden building and from the front balcony, a rope and pulley arrangement that could lower occupants to the ground is still in place.

Adjoining the president's bedroom is a private dining room, formerly a 'work room', beyond which is the bedroom used by the lady president with its small maid's room. This and the bedroom opposite were known as the Yellow and Pink bedrooms. The vicereine's bedroom is now the president's sitting room.





LEFT: The study table by the window in the president's bedroom

ABOVE: The president's bedroom, formerly the vicroy's

RIGHT: The fireplace in the president's bedroom





One of the bedrooms used by the president's staff



At the end of the corridor are rooms used by the doctor and security officer. One is reached down a narrow wooden staircase, and was formerly a sitting room.

On the second floor are the four small bedrooms created from the attic and typically used by the support staff accompanying the president. The little remaining attic space serves as a store for items no longer in use. During a visit for this volume the staff and I discovered a set of clocks, including some manufactured by Louis Desoutter, a well-known French watchmaker who settled in England in 1883.

THE CHALLENGES OF HERITAGE

The condition of The Retreat and its interiors as a whole leaves no doubt that it has been cherished for many years, and continues to be so. The president's secretariat takes a keen interest in its upkeep and maintenance is carried out regularly by the PWD as best as it can. The junior engineer has an office on the property, which itself contains several pieces of interesting old furniture.

This care continues despite a reduction in staff. Until the 1990s the estate had a staff of 29 including a section officer and 19 gardeners. Besides vegetables, apples and cherries from the property were once supplied to the Rashtrapati Bhavan or sold. Most of the staff has now been posted elsewhere or retired, and only a small number remain. Although the malis patrol and successfully protect the forest from illegal felling, the orchards have suffered and are a pale shadow of their former selves. Another factor for this is the large population of rhesus macaques that are any gardener's nightmare.

The condition of Shimla's Rashtrapati Niwas is vastly different. While to a large extent it has retained its original character, its maintenance is much more expensive. As a result, adequate maintenance has often been lacking. The East Wing in particular appears very neglected, and throughout the Niwas exposed areas of the soft, local stone—perhaps an unfortunate choice for exteriors—have weathered badly. Although the IAS authorities have made efforts to keep the remaining original furniture, over the



ABOVE: The view from The Retreat of Mashobra, where modern, concrete buildings are spreading over the hillsides

LEFT: In future years The Retreat's estate may be one of the few unspoilt forest areas at Mashobra



years a great deal of valuable period furniture and fittings were unwisely discarded. In addition, alterations to the building have been made without careful consideration. There have even been threats that the grounds would be taken over for construction or that the Niwas would be turned into a five-star hotel. Finally on 6 May 1997, after years of litigation, the protection and preservation of Rashtrapati Niwas and its land as historical heritage was mandated by orders of the Supreme Court.³² After decades, the Central Public Works Department under the supervision of INTACH restored the roofs—a project in which I took part. Conservation reports have been prepared, a recent one recommending repairs costing some Rs 90 crores, and the Archaeological Survey of India is now responsible for their implementation. At the time of writing funds were still awaited to begin essential full-fledged conservation.

Around Rashtrapati Niwas, the city of Shimla has grown immensely, with new buildings spreading ever closer to the summit of Jakhu Peak. The heritage areas of the

Niwas and its grounds therefore play an important part in keeping Shimla green. Even Mashobra, which in 1925 was called the ‘Mecca of Sunday Excursionists’ for its many beautiful picnic spots, finds itself in the midst of a construction boom. Along the Mashobra Ridge to Naldera, hotels, multi-storey residential complexes and villas are perched on sloping hillsides or fill spots of level ground. Over time, it seems likely that The Retreat, along with the reserved forest of the nearby catchment area that provides water for Shimla, will remain one of the few areas that retain Mashobra’s original charm.

Therefore these two buildings, linked in their history, and in their connection to the President of India, and both in their own way very remarkable structures, have a shared and important role to play in preserving at least part of the environment. But ironically, The Retreat, with its simple construction style based on indigenous construction practices, if looked after with just a modicum of care, is very likely to outlast the much grander and expensive Niwas.

ABOVE: The gardeners of The Retreat, much reduced in numbers from previous decades, who work under the experienced eye of Chait Ram (centre, in white). Together they protect some 100 acres of forest, grow seasonal vegetables in the kitchen gardens, and keep the lawns and flowerbeds immaculate

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TOP: The Retreat also has a collection of Chinese ceramics, or chinoiserie, made for export

ABOVE: Some of the now valuable Star of India crockery once used by the viceroys

RIGHT: An example of The Retreat's collection of Jaipur pottery, a vanishing art revived in the 19th century



LIFE AT MASHOBRA

Gillian Wright

Every year on the first day of the month of Jyeshth, around mid-May, a golden image of the god Sip, or Shiva, decked in roses, is borne in a palanquin from his own temple to a glade four kilometres away surrounded by closely growing deodar cedars stretching to the sky. Here his palanquin is set down before another traditional Himachali temple built of stone, slate and cedarwood, its balconies carved with elephants, peacocks and huntsmen in British dress aiming at tigers twice their size. Sip is a senior god of the former state of Koti,¹ and the two days he comes here, to the lower slopes of the Mashobra ridge, are celebrated as the Sipi mela.

When I arrived at the mela in 2014 children riding a Ferris wheel were squealing in delight and crowds of spectators were shouting their support for teams taking part in volleyball and kabaddi tournaments. Other fair-goers gathered around a stage to listen to a woman singing Pahari songs and schoolgirls in green and red traditional dress clicked selfies while they waited for their turn to perform in a dance competition. In stalls around the edge of the glade women's groups were selling hand-knitted woollens and local snacks like *sidus*, giant momos stuffed with sesame and dried fruit. Devotees walked quietly over to have darshan of Sip, as he sat in dappled sunlight in front of the temple. Enconced comfortably on a terraced bank overlooking the scene, women and children watched and waited for the highlight of the day—the *thoda* display.

As the sun began to set, the *thoda* field was demarcated by ropes. Great brass karnal horns boomed, and drums sounded—dholaks and naqqaras slung across the back of one man and played by another. Once the karnals fell silent, a shehnai played a haunting and stately melody and the musicians advanced, the men walking with them singing and swaying, arms outstretched, bending and turning gracefully, and holding aloft axes—symbols of strength—and arrows. At the climax of their song came a great cry and more karnal trumpeting. Inside the field, the teams of *thoda* archers strung longbows and in mock battle fired blunt wooden arrows at the feet of unarmed opponents who danced and jumped out of the way.

St. Crispin's Church, Mashobra, the image of an English rural parish church



Ashok Kumar and his wife Sumita with their son in their home in the firemen's lines at The Retreat



FAR LEFT: The Sipi Mela, one of the most important annual fairs in the former princely state of Koti, is a centuries' old tradition that still continues [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

LEFT: Women sitting on the steep bank above the mela ground, in the days when the fair was also a place where matches were made [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

Among the VIP spectators was Anirudh Singh, the MLA for the area, and a descendent of the ranas of Koti, demonstrating his family's continuing association with the occasion. In the days of the Koti state, the rana would preside over the festivities, his elephant taking visitors for rides around the ground. While the women of his family kept strict purdah, the rana himself interacted freely with the British and during the latter half of the 19th and early 20th century the guests in his shamiana included practically all the viceroys and commanders-in-chief. This mela was where the British society of Shimla interacted with the 'natives'.

Lady Dufferin summed up the British interest as 'colour and life and novelty'.² These were in plenty even on the journey. She described descending the hairpin bends of the steep track from Mashobra as 'trying to dance the quadrille on horseback' while Elisabeth Bruce noted the crush of rickshaws coming both ways and crowds of excited walkers. They were both most impressed by the Himachali women, especially those sitting on the terraced bank. Laden with jewellery from their heads to their toes they were 'one mass of silver bells, bracelets, bright

colours and sparkling eyes'. The mela in those days was the place where matches were made and many of these girls were prospective brides. While the local women shopped for fripperies imported from Birmingham, the British picnicked and bargained for modern, cruder imitations of the old silver jewellery Himachali women wore. The evening after the mela, Elisabeth and her sisters put on the necklaces and earrings they had purchased but, as she wrote in her journal, they 'did not succeed in looking quite Indian enough—for we *could* not wear the whole of their dress!'³

Among the fair-goers of today are Sunita Sharma and her husband, Ashok Kumar, since 1994 the fireman at the President's retreat. Many of Shimla's heritage buildings have fallen victim to fire in recent decades but the dedication of Ashok and other members of The Retreat's staff have so far kept it safe. Ashok and Sunita have raised two children in their quarters in the firemen's lines, far from the noise and distractions of Shimla. Like many people in the hills they have spent much of their lives walking the well-worn footpaths that often provide shorter and more pleasant routes than the more congested roads. For everyday



ABOVE: The ruined buildings of the Gables Hotel, a valued institution for generations of Shimla residents

*LEFT: Wildflower Hall, as it was when both it and The Gables were run by the renowned hotelier Mrs F.E. Hotz
[Source: Sandra Lean]*

necessities they descend the steep steps from their home through the forest to Mashobra bazaar,⁴ where a row of buildings in typical hill station style still bears witness that this pedestrian culture, now lost to many city dwellers, was once popular even among the elite.

On a high bank above the small shops of the bazaar looking out towards the snow, age and decay have made these buildings so fragile that it seems a strong gust of wind would blow them away. The remains of the once grand Gables Hotel, one of the premier institutions of Mashobra, they are now in the hands of the Himachal Pradesh government. Only one part of the former hotel, which locals say was the reception and dining room, is still reasonably well preserved with a Kashmiri style ceiling reminiscent of those in the Viceregal Lodge. In the 1920s the Gables belonged to that most enterprising hotelier Mrs F.E. Hotz, who also ran Wildflower Hall, not far from The Retreat and formerly the residence of the commander-in-chief, Lord Kitchener. A popular day's outing from Shimla was a walk to Wildflower Hall for lunch, followed by a descent via a path running by The Retreat's famous orchards to the Gables for tea and then back to Shimla, a round trip of 13½ miles (22 kilometres). Madhavi Bhatia, who has inherited her Kashmiri pandit family's beautiful period cottage in Shimla, recalls stories of her great-aunts taking the footpath to Mashobra in the company of their cousin and friends.⁵

On a hillock opposite what was once the garden entrance to the Gables stands the square-towered grey-stone church dedicated to St. Crispin, the patron saint of cobblers, made a symbol of Englishness by Shakespeare when his Henry V urged his troops to victory against the French at Agincourt on 'this St. Crispin's day'. This replica of a small parish church illustrates Mashobra's role as a rural hamlet of Shimla, a place to escape the heat and dusty roads of the capital and relax, enjoy, and recoup in what advertisements for the Gables referred to as its 'air like champagne'.⁶ It could not but have attracted a determined pedestrian like Elisabeth's father, the viceroy Victor Alexander Bruce, 9th Earl of Elgin.

THE VICEROY'S RETREAT

In 1894, the Elgins drove up from Kalka for their first Shimla summer in a procession of phaetons and tongas, the horses' harnesses decorated with crimson rhododendron flowers. That early March day the sun shone on snowy peaks, the temperature was 'chatteringly cold', and his party 'cooked claret' over the fire in the Viceregal Lodge's smoking room to warm themselves.⁷ The next two years the Elgins also followed protocol, travelling by tonga after their special train had carried them from Kolkata to the railhead at Kalka—each year by a different route—with halts for early morning tea, breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner, as well as to dress before meals. However, as his term progressed Elgin began to indulge his love of walking more and in his penultimate year as viceroy, he put his personal passion first. At 6.30 am on 3 April 1897 he and his entourage set off on foot at a bracing pace for a four-day march from Kalka to Shimla.⁸ This was, however, just a warm-up for the ultimate trek of the following year.

By this time the British enthusiasm for exploring the Himalaya had led to a flurry of guidebooks, notably one published in 1893 by Major Gordon Forbes. In his hints for travellers, he recommended a tent known as the 'Light Field Service Kabul' and a camp bed known as the 'Cashmir'. Items to carry included a hatchet, spade, candle lantern and cobbler's wax, and combustibles included gingerbread-nuts, tins of butter (Irish), cocoa, tea, potted meats and bacon (in canvas). Elgin may well have been aware of this guide because he chose to follow one of the trekking routes Forbes suggests, from Dharamshala under the peaks of the Dhauladhar range into the Kullu Valley and then on to the summer capital.

In 1898, the viceroy, his family, his private secretary, Henry Babington-Smith, and other members of his staff travelled by train as far as Pathankot and took tongas to Bhagsu, near Dharamshala—the newspaper correspondent accompanying them noting that the visit of a viceroy meant immediate improvement to roads and bridges. On 4 March they began their trek from Bhagsu. At Palampur, the





headquarters of the tea industry in the Kangra Valley, they met planters who complained about the high duties placed on tea by the amir of Afghanistan and demanded new roads and a railway and, rather like a modern politician, Lord Elgin stressed the need for private enterprise and talked of 'the survival of the fittest'. The viceregal party then put the troubles of the tea estates behind them and marched into Mandi state, where they were greeted by the vazir and then proceeded across the Dalchi Pass (2,778 metres) that marked the border between Mandi and Kullu. At Bajaura they watched traditional dances and saw three of the local deities. Thirteen days into their trek they were below the snow-covered hilltops of the Jalori Pass (3,225 metres). As they reached the top a storm broke and they hurried on an exhausting extra march through sleet and icy winds to Choai as the intended campsite was sodden. On 23 March they reached Narkanda, within striking distance of Shimla, where the roads began to improve, and two days later they arrived at The Retreat in time for tea, having travelled a distance of 220 miles (354 kilometres), with the viceroy walking every inch of the way.⁹ It had been a particularly momentous journey for two of his party. During the trek his private secretary had proposed to his daughter Elisabeth and she had accepted.

For Elgin, the joy of his beloved Retreat was the opportunity it gave him to walk. His grandson recalls that he wore out five pairs of hobnailed boots there and collected walking sticks of different styles and lengths for his expeditions.¹⁰ Elisabeth was no mean walker either and describes an evening stroll along the old Tibet road in the moonlight crossing five landslides on the way. Her main interest though, between her lessons and games of tennis, was another Victorian speciality, the collection and study of wild flowers in which she was aided by her future husband. She loved the wild roses, brambles and banks of maidenhair fern as well as the wild pink and white begonias that 'perched in the sharpest and most dangerous places' near

ABOVE: The Retreat as the Elgins would have seen it when they arrived after their three-week trek from Dharamshala just in time for tea [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]

LEFT: The rhododendron native to the Shimla hills, whose flowers adorned the horses' harnesses as the Elgins made their way to Shimla in 1894





The Retreat. Besides sketching, she wrote *An Annotated List of Flowers Collected in the Neighbourhood of Simla and Mashobra*, following in the botanical footsteps of the wife of Governor-General Lord Dalhousie. In 1830, while her husband was commander-in-chief, Lady Dalhousie had been the first to dispatch a noteworthy collection of plants from the area to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.¹¹

Earlier in this volume we've seen how the similarity of Himalayan and British flora fascinated British people nostalgic for 'home', but for the amateur botanist it was not just the similarity that was fascinating but the sheer abundance of species. Henry Collett, the author of *Flora Simlensis* (1902), counted 1,326 species of plants in the Shimla area and calculated that while the British Isles offered only 37 species of fern, Shimla and its surroundings were home to 124.¹²

Those who came after Elgin took pleasure in The Retreat according to their own tastes. Lady Minto described it as a 'tiny place with a most wonderful view', the slopes around carpeted with blue periwinkle. In the kitchen garden, however, all was not always well. A devastating insect played havoc with the vegetables and, in those pre-insecticide days, six malis were kept on special duty to kill them. Lady Minto and her three daughters themselves preferred larger prey.

Around Narkanda they hunted monal, chir, koklas and khalij pheasants as well as chukor partridges. Returning to Mashobra after hunting bear in Matiana, Lady Minto wrote, 'My faith in mules was shaken by seeing Violet's animal fall head over heels, precipitating her over her head; fortunately she escaped with only a few bruises.' Violet was not one to be discouraged. Another year her mother reported, 'Violet went out ghural stalking at five thirty [am]. I believe she climbed precipices, and the shikaris had to make steps of their backs and shoulders and heads while others pulled her

Victorian amateur botanists, including the Elgins' daughter Elisabeth, revelled in the abundance and variety of flora they found in the Shimla hills



Apple blossoms in The Retreat's orchards that were once famous for their cherries and a wide variety of other fruit

up on to impossible shelves in the cliffs with long poles . . . She really is like a chamois in these hills.' As ghural live on almost vertical slopes this description of the terrain at least is realistic. Most of the Minto family's bag however came from the plains. During 1906 alone they killed 6,770 animals including 3,995 sandgrouse and 2,228 wildfowl. In the hills they had shot 21 pheasants, 1 serow, 2 ghural, 5 musk deer and some of a total of 50 bear.¹³ Very few, if any, of these were likely to have come from Koti state. Kaushalya Dutt, granddaughter of the last rana, recalls that a road was never made through the forest to their palace at Kiar Koti. Her grandfather in particular thought that if there were a road 'every day some official or other would come and shoot'.¹⁴ Today, at The Retreat, the sole indication of the former obsession with blood sports is a lone pair of antlers over a door in the hall.

Away from The Retreat was the whirl of social and political activity of Shimla, and by the 1920s guests at the Viceregal Lodge included more and more Indian leaders. The Begum of Bhopal expressed her advanced ideas on women's emancipation to the Vicereine Alice Reading. Mahatma Gandhi called for a one-on-one conversation with the viceroy, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah came to dinner with his wife. As Alice Reading wrote, '... with less clothes and more golden brown skin showing than I have ever seen before. Her attire was a Liberty scarf, a jeweled bandeau and an emerald necklace. She is extremely pretty, fascinating and terribly made up. All the men raved about her, the women sniffed.'



The view from the windows that captivated those who stayed at what Lady Pamela Hicks described as 'an adorable, tiny, cosy, restful little house'

Great balls at the Viceregal Lodge were the social events of the season, one of the most spectacular being a Chinese Ball thrown in 1924. The state rooms were decorated with red, orange and blue Chinese panels and thousands of lanterns. The entire staff was made up with slanting eyes and pigtails, and dressed in blue satin trousers and black satin jackets. Some 350 guests in Chinese costume prostrated themselves or bowed to the viceroy in mock imperial Chinese fashion, and before the dancing began were entertained by a dragon with car headlight eyes and girls gifting sandalwood fans and Burmese sunshades.

In contrast, The Retreat was purposely kept old-fashioned and 'tumbledown'. There was still no electricity, only oil lamps and candles. The bathrooms had no running hot water, and the kitchen, as we have seen, was small and basic when compared with the immense china godowns, stores and ranges of the Viceregal Lodge. And yet there was luxury. Alice Reading had a box of novels by her bed, her favourite biscuits, ice-cold milk from her special cow and even Malvern spring water imported from England. The viceroy meanwhile continued at least some official duties on his weekends at Mashobra. Every few hours, one of the Bodyguard in scarlet and gold and mounted on a coal black horse would arrive bearing dispatches and letters.¹⁵

In May each year the fruit trees in The Retreat's steeply terraced orchards were heavy with fruit. Himachal is known above all for its apples but in the late 19th-century experiments were made at growing all kinds of cash crops from grapes and

American blackberries to peaches, pears, plums, Maltese oranges, walnuts and Spanish chestnuts.¹⁶ Mashobra's municipal orchards, greatly encouraged by Edward Buck, the former owner of The Retreat, were at the forefront of these experiments, and there is still a major horticultural research station there. The Retreat's orchards, while not large, were renowned for their apricots and cherries. Among comparative rarities were, and remain, deliciously tart quinces. Guests at The Retreat made it a point to visit the orchards and on 9 May 1947 the party walking these terraces included Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Louis and Edwina Mountbatten.

THE MOUNTBATTENS AND THE NEHRUS

The Mountbattens had arrived in March that year not to rule India but to hand over power, and Mountbatten felt it imperative to break the ice with India's leaders. To do that with Nehru, he invited him to stay at the Viceregal Lodge. The only surviving witness to that visit is the Mountbattens' daughter, Lady Pamela Hicks. When I met her at her home deep in the English countryside, she told me that she and her parents flew to Ambala and drove up by car to Shimla. She especially remembered the excitement of experiencing the cool air as they climbed higher. Nehru and then Krishna Menon joined them a few days later. Nehru accompanied them to Mashobra for tea. This was the first time the Mountbattens had seen The Retreat and they loved it, Pamela finding it an 'adorable, tiny, cosy, restful little house'.

Mountbatten's press secretary, Alan Campbell-Johnson, was staying there. From his account the atmosphere at tea was initially strained. Nehru remarked that he found Shimla's hand-drawn rickshaws demeaning and an affront to human dignity. At that time there was no motorable road through The Retreat's grounds, only a rickshaw path. Pamela and Edwina Mountbatten may not have said so but they shared Nehru's view. Pamela described the moment they were first presented with half a dozen gleaming viceregal rickshaws, the barefooted coolies all in the smartest livery.

RIGHT: On the road to The Retreat, the 'Viceregal Villa', May 1947. From left: Lord Louis Mountbatten; Edwina Mountbatten, holding Mizzen; Alan Campbell-Johnston; the head gardener, Reader; Jawaharlal Nehru; Saiyid Ahsan; Fay Campbell-Johnston; Pamela; the Times correspondent Eric Britter; and the military secretary, Douglas Currie [Source: MS 62 Broadlands Archive]



On the road to "The Viceregal Villa", May 1947. From left: Lord Louis Mountbatten; Edwina Mountbatten, holding Mizzen; Alan Campbell-Johnston; the head gardener, Reader; Jawaharlal Nehru; Saiyid Ahsan; Fay Campbell-Johnston; Pamela; the Times correspondent Eric Britter; and the military secretary, Douglas Currie [Source: MS 62 Broadlands Archive]

'It was difficult to get my mother to climb into one. She could easily have made a scene but must have decided against it. I was well trained by her to be repulsed by them, and I did find when I was in the thing that . . . you felt so humiliated for yourself and for the coolies that you wanted to jump out. However, I must say they travelled amazing distances at great speed. And I remember, when after our first trip we refused to use them, and walked into town instead, looking into a coolie's face and seeing how hurt he looked.'

By the time tea had been taken, everyone had relaxed, and they set off to see the house and grounds. As they explored the orchard, Nehru revealed his love of walking in the hills and showed his companions how to climb backwards up a slope to rest the calf muscles and make breathing easier at high altitudes.¹⁷

On a personal level the visit to Shimla was a definite success. As Pamela said, 'When there are just five of you, you do get to know people quickly, especially someone like Nehru who was not tight-lipped in any way. He would either slap you or hug you. It was because Father found him easy to get on with that he showed him the Plan.'¹⁸



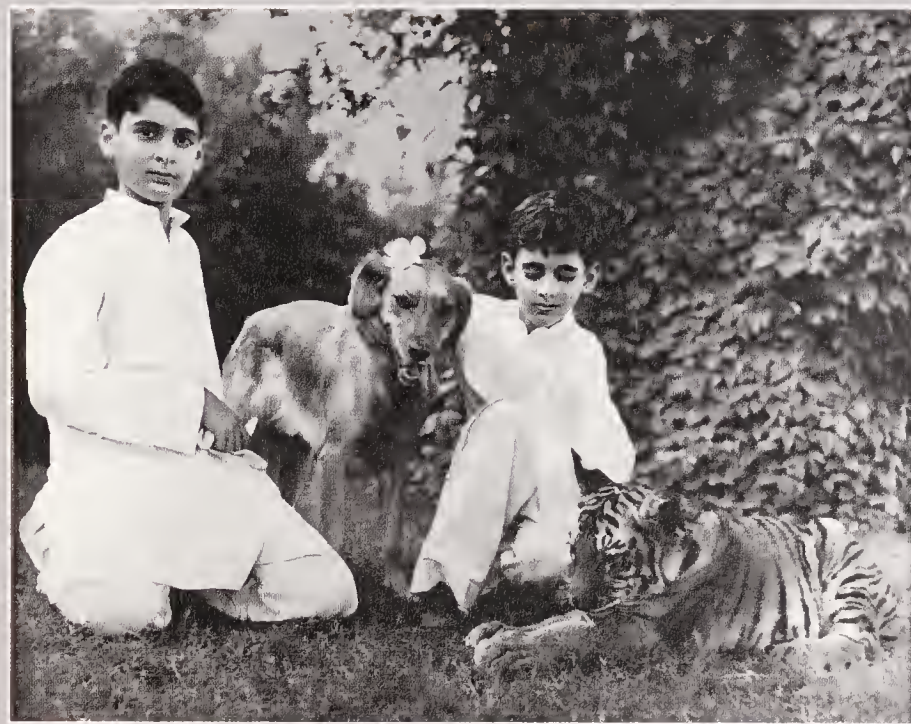
eat - the Viceregal Villa, Mashobra
Nehru, Sayid Ahsan, Fay C-J,
, Douglas Currie



Tea with Jawaharlal Nehru at our villa "The Retreat" at Mashobra
near Simla - 11th October
(6)

This was Mountbatten's plan for the division of India, newly approved by the Cabinet in London with just a few minor changes. It provided for a possible Balkanisation of the country, with the creation not only of India and Pakistan but the opportunity for the princely states to chart their own course. Nehru was appalled by what he called 'a picture of fragmentation and conflict and disorder'.¹⁹ The plan was immediately shelved. Even so Partition when it came did result in enormous conflict and disorder—the killings and mass migrations in Punjab and Bengal. In those first months of freedom, the government was faced with immense problems and then in January 1948, the Mahatma was assassinated. A year after his first visit Nehru returned to The Retreat to stay with Mountbatten, now governor-general, and his family. He seemed grateful for a brief respite from his duties. As he wrote to his daughter, his 'Darling Indu':

'I had four very quiet and restful days in Mashobra. I did no work at all, although I took many papers. I was not in the mood to work. We visited Narkanda one day and on our way went to a village fair which was very interesting with the coloured garments and head-dresses of the village women.'²⁰



ABOVE: Jawaharlal Nehru, Edvina and Louis Mountbatten, and their daughter Pamela at breakfast at The Retreat in October 1948
[Source: MS 62 Broadlands Archive]

BELOW: In the ADC's room, a childhood photograph of Indira Gandhi's sons, Sanjay and Rajiv, still bears testament to the family's long association with The Retreat



TOP: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, with External Affairs Minister Sardar Swaran Singh on her right, facing Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto during the summit held in Shimla in 1972 [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

ABOVE: US Secretary of State of the Treasury John Connally, in conversation with Indira Gandhi on the lawns of The Retreat, where she stayed during the talks they held in Shimla in July 1972 [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

RIGHT: Benazir Bhutto (right), daughter of the Pakistan president, during a visit to an emporium in Shimla at the time of the summit talks [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

At the fair he had been surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd and responded by making an impromptu speech standing on the seat of the open-topped Sunbeam sports car in which he and the Mountbattens were travelling.²¹ The Retreat itself was the only place they could be certain of being undisturbed. Nehru practiced his yoga, being particularly comfortable in *sirshasana*. Lady Pamela remembers that he would try to teach them to stand on their heads too. She did better than her father, who was rather heavy. Nehru was also a good sport when it came to parlour games, and was excellent at ‘racing demons’, a boisterous card game he played with her and the ADCs where four aces were placed on the floor and the players, each holding a shuffled pack of cards, competed to complete the suits.²² Lord Louis answered correspondence on the verandah, there was time for walks with the Mountbattens’ Sealyham terrier, Mizzen, and there was plenty of time for conversation on every topic under the sun. Over these few days too, Nehru and Edwina Mountbatten developed the sustaining and profound attachment that they enjoyed until she died.²³

In later years, Nehru visited The Retreat with his daughter Indira and she would bring her two sons there when the pressure of her life in Delhi became too much.²⁴ In April 1971, a month after she swept to power in the general elections that made her the undisputed leader of the country and the Congress Party, she was again at Mashobra with ‘a pile of work’. In a letter to her old friend, the photographer and author Dorothy Norman, she wrote of the exhilaration she’d felt ‘at the manner in which . . . the younger generation of all sections made our election campaign their own.’ She described The Retreat as ‘very English countryside in character with some lovely old tables and other things. It is quiet and you know how I love the mountains.’²⁵

THE SHIMLA SUMMIT

That December war broke out between India and Pakistan. India’s victory and the emergence of Bangladesh made Indira Gandhi appear even more invincible. A conference with Pakistan was arranged in Shimla the

following summer, and she naturally chose to stay at The Retreat. Once the Pakistan president, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, arrived on 28 May, delegations from both countries began discussing the return of prisoners of war and of Pakistan territory occupied by India, and also India’s proposals for a no-war pact and for the Ceasefire Line in Kashmir to be accepted as the international border. The latter was the major sticking point. By the afternoon of 2 July, the last day of the conference, the talks appeared to have failed. Bhutto then requested a meeting with the Indian prime minister and was invited to The Retreat at 6 pm. He was received by P.N. Haksar, Mrs Gandhi’s principal secretary, and her advisor, the economist P.N. Dhar. He remarked to them, ‘You officials give up too easily.’ According to P.N. Dhar, he emerged from the meeting an hour later looking pleased and saying, ‘We have settled the matter and decided to give you some work to do before dinner.’²⁶

The work in fact extended well beyond dinner with the Agreement finally signed by the two leaders just after midnight. Their personal intervention resulted in a set of guiding principles for durable and peaceful neighbourly relations between the two countries. India agreed to withdraw from Pakistan territory, while Pakistan agreed to respect the Line of Control in Kashmir and settle disputes bilaterally.²⁷ A key factor in making this accord possible was, according to P.N. Dhar, Bhutto’s verbal commitment to Indira Gandhi made at that meeting at The Retreat to gradually make the Line of Control the accepted international border. It was a commitment that was never met.

The Shimla Agreement immediately resulted in a slight thawing of what were then extremely frosty, if not hostile, relations between the United States and India. The very next month President Nixon sent John Connally, his Secretary of State of the Treasury, to meet the Indian prime minister. He called on her at The Retreat²⁸ while talks took place at the Raj Bhavan in Shimla. Connally was relieved that they went reasonably well.²⁹

The Nehru-Gandhi family’s connection with Mashobra continued even after Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984. Munshi Ram, who has worked as the beldar at



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Though difficult to believe today, until at least the mid-1960s, when this photograph was taken, the traditional Himachali style of architecture was still the norm around Mashobra [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]; from 1947 until 1965, the president's first home in the hills was the former Viceregal Lodge, renamed Rashtrapati Nivas; President Rajendra Prasad receiving gifts of flowers from children who acted in a play organised in Shimla by the army's Western Command [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; President R Venkatraman welcomed on his arrival in Manali in 1990 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; President Rajendra Prasad at lunch with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the governor of Punjab and the lieutenant governor of Himachal Pradesh in Shimla in May 1954 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; and the president and guests at an 'at-home' reception held in the gardens of the Rashtrapati Nivas in 1960 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]



The Retreat since 1985, well remembers her son and successor Rajiv coming to stay with his wife Sonia and their children. He found them very polite, without airs and graces, and points out the trees that they planted in the garden. Another of the beldar's treasured memories is his conversation with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee when he stayed briefly at The Retreat during his visit to Shimla in March 2002.³⁰ They exchanged just a few words about the weather, but Munshi Ram also had the opportunity to attend the press conference the prime minister held in The Retreat's dining room.³¹

Eleven years after Indira Gandhi's death the president's tranquil home in the hills again witnessed an occasion of international diplomacy. The king of Bhutan, the president of Pakistan, and the prime ministers of Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives all gathered there with their Indian hosts for a one-day retreat during the Eighth SAARC Summit held in New Delhi in May 1995.³²

President Pranab Mukherjee was minister of external affairs at the time. He recalls,

'The Retreat was chosen to give the SAARC leaders opportunity to spend private time in each other's company in the beautiful surroundings of Mashobra. The retreat was a success and SAARC leaders enjoyed the experience.'³³

THE PRESIDENT'S HOMES IN THE HILLS

All these visitors came as the guests of the president who until 1965 still had at his disposal both The Retreat and Shimla's former Viceregal Lodge, renamed Rashtrapati Niwas, and the staff that went with them. It took time to dismantle the elaborate arrangements of the Raj. To prepare for Dr Rajendra Prasad's month-long visit to Shimla in September 1952 three advance parties were dispatched to Shimla by rail while a detachment of the President's Bodyguard travelled up by truck, and the presidential vehicles—a Rolls Royce, a Packard, a



Humber, a Buick, a staff car and a station wagon—drove up in convoy. The president himself travelled overnight to Kalka in his saloon in the special train. This had eight carriages with 1st, 2nd and 3rd class accommodation for the 81 staff that accompanied him. Besides his personal attendants, an armed police guard, two ADCs, his military secretary, his personal secretary, his private secretary and their office staff, there was a long list of Class III and IV household personnel. These included two *jamadars*, two *chobdars*, ten *chaprassis*, four *khalassis*, a head *khansama*, an *abdar*, a butler, eight *khidmatgars*, three silvermen, five *masalchis*, a head cook, four cooks and cook's mates, five *dhobis*, four sweepers, a tennis marker, two tennis boys, a barber, and the ADCs' bearers. With all its passengers and luggage aboard, the special train departed from the ceremonial platform at New Delhi railway station at 11.05 pm, arriving at Kalka at 7 am the next morning. Leaving the rest of the party to follow by train, the president and six of his staff then boarded the Special Rail Motor, a very comfortable bus on rails. At 7.15 am the rail motor chugged off, stopping for precisely 27 minutes for breakfast at the picturesque station of Barog, before reaching Summerhill, the station below Rashtrapati Niwas, at 11.45 am.³⁴ From Summerhill he drove to the Niwas in the Rolls Royce.

Over the next two days he had separate meetings with each governor of Punjab and the lieutenant-governor and

chief minister of Himachal Pradesh and during his stay a series of 'at-home' receptions were held in his honour. During his visits the president, of course, threw his own at-home, and made a point to support local institutions, whether it be attending a production of the Shimla Amateur Dramatic Club at the historic Gaiety Theatre on the Mall, or the speech day of Bishop Cotton School. Rajendra Prasad's close links with the people of the region preceded Independence, and he invited Raja Digvijai Chandra of the princely state of Jubbal, a former foreign service officer, to join him as one of his ADCs. His son, Yogendra Chandra, remembers with some amusement that the president invited him and his wife to dinner at the Niwas shortly after they were married. His father was on duty as ADC and, as protocol demanded, he had to call his son 'sir' all evening.³⁵

The panoply of state at Shimla was in great contrast to the profound simplicity of Rajendra Prasad's personal needs and those of his predecessor, the first and only Indian governor-general, Rajaji. Tara Gandhi-Bhattacharya spent time in Shimla before Independence with her paternal grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, and in June 1949³⁶ with her maternal grandfather, Rajaji. As she told me:

'The atmosphere about them was the same. Minimalism without talking of minimalism, you know? Rajaji was a more private person, but in

ABOVE: President R. Venkatraman welcomed on his arrival in Manali in 1990 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

ABOVE: President K. Narayanan with the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, Virbhadra Singh, in the drawing room of The Retreat [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

their worldly possessions and maintenance of daily routine they were the same, and they both paid special attention to their grandchildren.³⁷

For Rajaji's grandchildren the trip to Shimla was pure holiday. While Rajaji and his daughter Namagiri, who ran his household, travelled in one railcar up to Summerhill, Tara's brother Rajmohan Gandhi remembers the rest of the family crowded into a second railcar that followed them. Besides his parents, himself, Tara and their two brothers, there were his uncle Narasimhan and his widowed aunt Thangam with her children.³⁸

Also part of that tour was Rajaji's ADC, the naval officer and World War II veteran, Kirpal Singh. He describes the enormous affection and loyalty that Rajaji inspired. Never aloof, a lawyer and scholar who translated both the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* into English, Rajaji found time to talk to his ADC about a range of subjects and even borrowed and read one of his books on military history.³⁹

In Shimla, Tara was struck by the woody fragrance of the former Viceregal Lodge and experimented with playing the piano. Rajaji's daughter Namagiri supervised the cooking of the vegetarian food for the family. This plain South Indian fare was so delicious that Kirpal Singh often preferred it to the food prepared for the staff. Although the governor-general was a strict teetotaler and there was no question of alcohol being served, the ADC found that he never tried to stop his staff from enjoying a drink. As a result his off-duty hours were spent in the convivial company of the staff of the governor of Punjab and the maharaja of Patiala.

With Kirpal Singh in attendance, Rajaji and his family drove to Mashobra for a day's visit to The Retreat.⁴⁰ The snow peaks were clearly visible, the orchards were at their best, milk was supplied by the estate's Jersey cows, and Kirpal Singh was fascinated by the escape rope that would lower people slowly to the ground from the first floor verandah in event of fire.

Between moments of relaxation, both Rajaji and Rajendra Prasad carried on their duties in Shimla just as they did in Delhi. In 1951, one of the president's pressing concerns was the Hindu Code Bill drafted by B.R. Ambedkar. The bill proposed amending Hindu Personal Law to greatly increase women's rights and outlaw caste distinctions in matters of marriage and adoptions. It attracted opposition from conservatives, largely male and upper caste, inside and outside the provisional Parliament. Rajendra Prasad himself had strong reservations. In a letter to Nehru from Shimla, he argued that 'occasions requiring the President to take an independent line cannot be ruled out' and doubted 'the moral and constitutional . . . authority of government and the present Parliament to pass this Bill.'⁴¹ In the event Nehru avoided a confrontation with the president and the bill lapsed, its various provisions eventually becoming law with Rajendra Prasad's assent in 1955 and 1956.

Rajendra Prasad was the first and the last president to experience Rashtrapati Niwas as his residence. His successor, the internationally renowned scholar Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, came to the Shimla palace only once and that, as described in the first chapter, was to give it away to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

From that day on The Retreat was the president's only residence in the hills, and was used more or less as its name suggests. Presidents visited for shorter periods, spending time reading and walking in the grounds as well as studying files and preparing for meetings with foreign dignitaries.⁴² Here they had the chance to relax with their families, lingering over lunch and dinner and chatting. President V.V. Giri's daughter-in-law, Mohini Giri, remembers the wonderful biscuits and baked items made in the kitchen and spending hours basking in the sunlight, knitting garments for the charities she supported.⁴³ During most visits presidents would host an at-home, a tea party held on the lawns and attended by officials, elected representatives and citizens of Shimla, and there would be a few formal engagements in the state capital.



A view of The Retreat in May when the banksiae roses around the bay windows are in full bloom



After Rajendra Prasad, the only president to spend as long as a month at a time in the hills has been President R. Venkatraman. Delighting in the natural world and the mountains, The Retreat was for him a 'dream house' and he firmly believed that to keep it maintained and productive it needed to be lived in.⁴⁴ This he succeeded in doing even at a time of considerable political instability—his term saw four prime ministers.

President Venkatraman divided his day at Mashobra between official work, outdoor activities and interaction with the local community. He enjoyed meeting people while strolling on the Mall in Shimla and when he and his wife visited local schools, particularly a school for the deaf, they brought with them gifts of baskets of fruit from the orchards. A walk in the orchards among the lychee, plum, apricot, cherry and apple trees was one of the president's favourite occupations. He ensured new saplings were planted to replace old or dying ones, and the estate's *malis* were thrilled to have a president who was interested in everything they grew down to the last cauliflower. In his time, the tennis and badminton courts at The Retreat were still in use and even at the age of 80 he played a vigorous half hour of badminton, no mean feat considering the altitude. From Mashobra he explored other parts of Himachal, travelling to Tapta Pani, Narkanda, Manali, Dharamshala and the Tibet border. Although the helicopter had become the favoured mode of transport to Mashobra, he still preferred when possible to take the train up from Kalka.⁴⁵

President K.R. Narayanan and his wife Usha also had a lifelong habit of badminton, and their daughter Chitra remembers them playing in the evenings at The Retreat. Chitra and her daughter, Chandrika, accompanied them for a rare visit in September 1997. As her father, whose term was marked by the Kargil conflict and a succession of constitutional crises, considered even a few days away from the capital as a long break, Chitra particularly treasures memories of her parents at Mashobra enjoying the crisp mountain air, her mother reading surrounded by flowers in the garden. The day they arrived, her father had summoned Rajesh Kumar, the CPWD engineer responsible for The





Retreat's maintenance. He had arrived feeling extremely nervous, but the president only wanted to congratulate him on how well The Retreat was kept. He later arranged for Kumar to work at the Rashtrapati Bhavan where he was greatly concerned about the condition of the Guest Wing whose roofs were leaking and in urgent need of repair.⁴⁶

After a period when the property was little used, President Pranab Mukherjee is the latest occupant to appreciate its potential. As he says, 'I find The Retreat peaceful, serene and tranquil. My secretariat has invested a great deal of energy and time in refurbishing it. It is now a comfortable as well as elegant place to stay.'⁴⁷

THE GLORIES OF NATURE

Presidents often visit in May, when the *banksiae* roses climbing around the bay windows of the main sitting room are smothered in clusters of creamy yellow blossoms. Iris and daffodils are in bloom in the flowerbeds, red lilies are in bud on the hillside below the lawn, and the cold frames are full of pots of primula and geraniums. The forest around is a collage of all shades of green, the sheen on new leaves catching the sunlight. Unlike the chir-pine-clad lower slopes of the hills, and the densely packed deodar or Himalayan cedars (*Cedrus deodara*) of the valley of the nearby Cachment Area Sanctuary, the Retreat's forest contains a multitude of plants.

A walk around the estate with the senior gardener, Chait Ram, reveals this glorious variety. We note the prickly, glossy new leaves of the green oak (*Quercus floribunda*), that here replaces the silver oak of lower altitudes, and the strange, shaggy bark of mature Indian horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus indica*) with their whorls of leaves and candelabra of delicate flowers. In dappled

ABOVE: New maple leaves glow in the morning sun

LEFT: The driveway to The Retreat leads through mixed deciduous and evergreen forest



shade stand maples (*Acer cappadocicum* and *Acer acuminatum*), both with characteristic lobed leaves, the former's smooth-edged foliage boasting long coral-red stems. Maples and chestnuts are among the forest's deciduous trees. Besides deodar and the occasional rhododendron (*Rhododendron arboreum*), among the evergreens are the West Himalayan spruce (*Picea smithiana*), the West Himalayan silver fir (*Abies pindrou*), the blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*), and the Himalayan yew (*Taxus baccata* subsp. *Wallichiana*) with its flattened fringes of dark green leaves. Chait Ram introduces one small leathery-leaved tree as *sansad*, used for making lice combs. In fact this tree, the Himalayan Box (*Buxus wallichiana*), has many practical and medicinal uses, including, it seems, the treatment of syphilis and rheumatism. As a result it has been greatly over-exploited⁴⁸ and it's heartening to find that it has sanctuary at The Retreat. At the foot of the lawn a pair of graceful trees stand side by side like identical twins, their translucent maroon-brown foliage providing a striking contrast to everything else in the forest. These are examples of that familiar tree of English parks and gardens, the copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Atropunicea') that here in the Himalaya have remained uncharacteristically small.

This varied forest allows a diverse understorey of shrubs, as well as ferns, violets and ground-hugging wild strawberries. Every turn in the footpaths through the forest produces surprises—in a patch of sunlight you may be struck by the ethereal beauty



FAR LEFT: One of the joys of The Retreat is a quiet cup of early morning tea on the lawn, with only the wind in the trees and the calls of birds breaking the silence

LEFT: The copper beeches at the foot of the lawns

of the wild mountain clematis (*Clematis montana*), a plant that during the Raj was a prized export to gardens in England. As cicadas sing hidden in the trees, an ultramarine flycatcher, one of The Retreat's avian summer visitors, hawks for insects, and a flock of striated laughing thrushes forages through the leaf litter.

It has to be said that birds seem to regard The Retreat as their own, and there is no better way to see them than sitting on the lawns in the early morning. Eurasian jays screech and clown in the spruce trees, Himalayan and hooded woodpeckers, bar-tailed treecreepers and white-tailed nuthatches in their blue and orange livery prise insects from crevices in tree trunks. Flitting through branches and shrubs in their search for insects come mixed flocks of tiny gem-like birds filling the air with their chattering, whistles and bursts of song. Among them are grey-hooded warblers, with their bright yellow bellies, and spot-winged, green-backed, black-throated and the much less commonly seen fire-capped tits. From the trees nearby comes the skirling of great barbets and the mellifluous voice of the blue whistling thrush. Companionable streaked laughing thrushes hop among the flowerbeds, entertaining with their conversational 'whees' and 'whirrs', while a flock of their much shyer relatives, chestnut-crowned laughing thrushes, fly in ones and twos across the garden to reach a fresh patch of forest. High overhead, huge wings outstretched, Himalayan griffon vultures coast the thermals.



Grey-headed canary flycatcher



Great barbet



Blue whistling thrush



Black-throated tit



Grey bushchat



Himalayan woodpecker



Brown-fronted woodpecker



Bar-tailed tree creeper



Kalij pheasant (female)

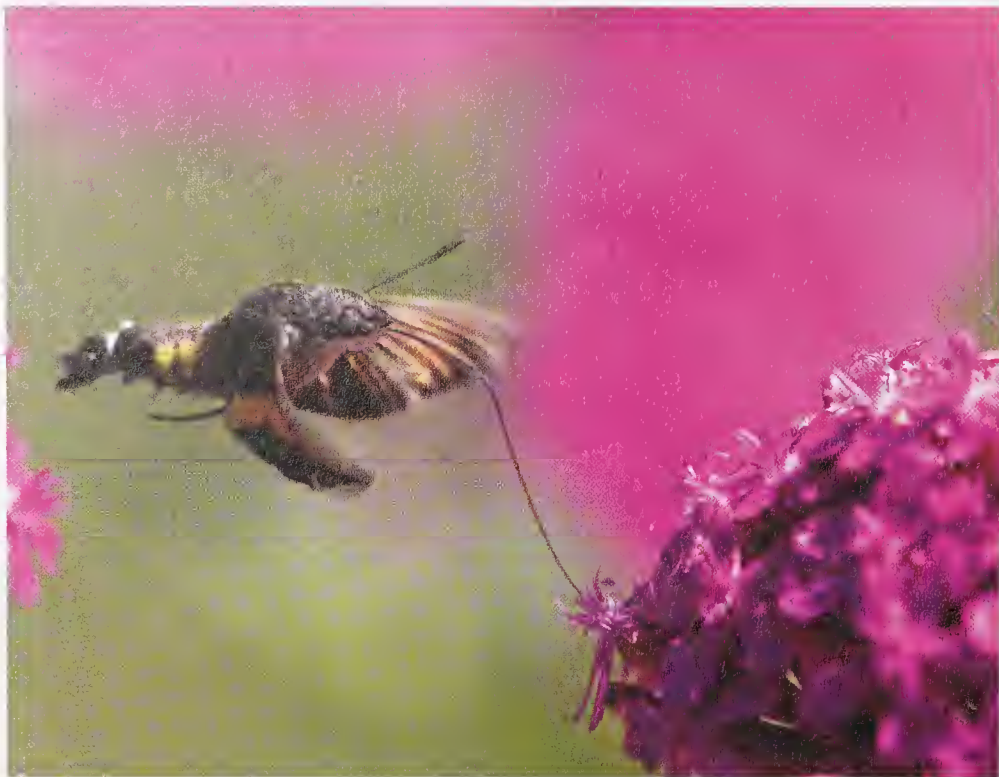


Green-backed tit



Streaked laughing thrush

Birds have made The Retreat's gardens their own mixed hunting parties active, especially in the mornings



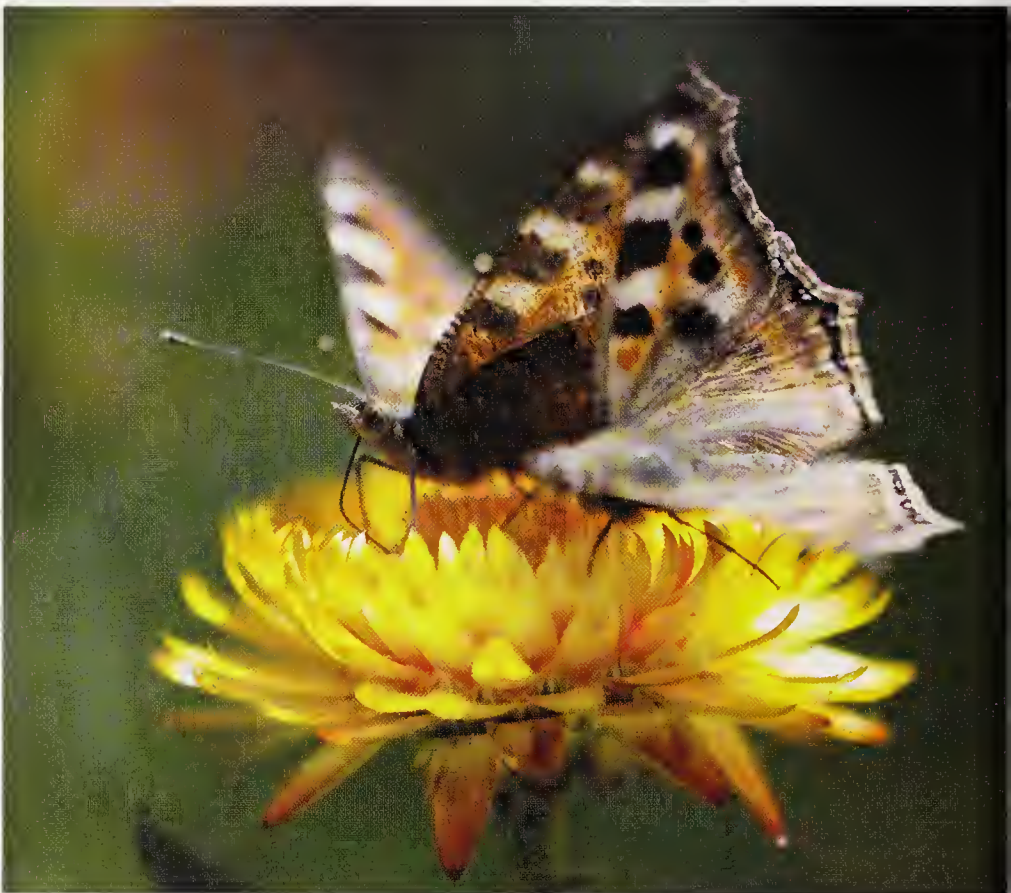
Himalayan Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Macroglossum nycteris



Great Blackvein, Aporia agathon pliryxe



Common Map, Cyrestis thyodamis



Indian Tortoiseshell, Aglaia caschmirensis

BUTTERFLIES OF THE RETREAT

As the sun warms them, clouds of butterflies appear. The western Himalaya alone are home to some 500 species of butterflies and many more species of moths and we still know very little about them. It seemed, therefore, that a survey of these beautiful creatures would be an excellent way to illustrate biodiversity at The Retreat. To carry out the survey, the first in the Shimla hills for 70 years,⁴⁹ we invited Peter Smetacek and Rajashree Bhuyan of the Butterfly Research Centre in Bhimtal. They arrived just after the end of the monsoon in September in time for the year's second flush of butterflies and moths. The first and most abundant is in May and June. As butterflies are, as Peter puts it, 'solar-powered', there were few species to be found on the shady forest floor apart from wood brown butterflies, the edges of their wings rimmed with eye-like patterns to trick predators into attacking them rather than the butterflies' real head.

The orchards and the kitchen gardens, with their tangles of grasses, clover and other wild flowers were the favoured habitats of most butterflies. Their very names conjured up their diversity—swallowtail, silverstripe, Queen of Spain fritillary, leopard, tortoiseshell, red admiral, blue admiral, chocolate pansy, peacock pansy, chestnut tiger, dark blue tiger, white-bordered copper, sorrel sapphire, Himalayan sergeant and striated satyr. One soberly coloured individual with an attractive array of eyespots basked on a garden wall, a habit that led the species to be called simply the Common Wall.

Butterflies have slender antennae, club-shaped at the end, and all butterfly-like creatures with any other shape of antennae are moths. Many fly by day, and one such burnet moth that Peter caught in the kitchen garden revealed its highly toxic defence mechanism. It stank of hydrogen cyanide which it manufactures or collects and miraculously stores in its body without being poisoned itself.

As the sun set, Munshi Ram and Ashok Kumar helped us set up a mercury lamp and a white sheet against a wall

of the house to attract nocturnal moths. We sat down to wait. It grew dark. A mountain scops owl called in the distance. And then moths began to fly towards the light on humming wings and settle on the sheet behind it. Once more there was an amazing array of colour and design, oranges, browns and greens, stripes, spots and in the case of the death's head hawk moth, what seemed to be the outline of a skull on its thorax. This substantial creature is a honey thief, raiding beehives for its food. Some half a dozen other species were fruit piercers, perhaps feasting on the apples in the orchard, while two others fed on lichens in their larval stage. As lichens are a sign of an unpolluted environment, these moths were an encouraging sight.

By the end of the survey, Peter and Rajashree had recorded 64 species of moth and 41 species of butterfly — 42 including a Spangle I had photographed in May [see Survey report]. The list included six species — three butterflies and three moths—never recorded before in the Shimla hills, an indication of how productive longer-term research could be.

In the weeks following this trip the days shortened and the leaves of the maple and horse chestnut trees began to turn to gold and fall. As every year, The Retreat staff still heard the occasional rough call of a barking deer, and grey langur and marauding rhesus macaques still visited the garden. When the hill schools closed for the winter, wives and children and the staff who could be spared headed down to see relatives in the plains, and for those remaining the question was when the first snow would fall. The snow, when it comes at The Retreat, falls softly, muffling sound and sparkling blue in the moonlight. This is the time of year when the president often flies south to stay at the Rashtrapati Nilayam, but if he were to visit his historic hill station home instead, he would see it at its most isolated and pristine. From his sitting room with its roaring fire, he could gaze in wonder at the Himalaya in all their glory and he might, as his staff occasionally do, step out in the morning to find leopard's footprints in the snow.

Notes

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5. Interview with Sunita Sharma, wife of Ashok Kumar, 17 November 2014.
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9. Album of Spring Tours 1894–98, Photo 15/1, Papers of Victor Alexander Bruce, 9th Earl of Elgin as Viceroy of India 1894–99, British Library.
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14. Mary Catherine Minto, Countess of, *My Indian Journal* (Calcutta?: 191?) entries for 4.4.1906, 21.9.1906, 6.10.1907, 11.5.1909 and List of Bag 1906.
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23. Interview with Lady Pamela Hicks, 11 May 2014.
24. Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Edwina Mountbatten 12.3.1957, Broadland Archive, quoted in Philip Ziegler op. cit. 473.
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29. The Simla Agreement, 2 July 1972, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India <http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?19005/Simla+Agreement+July+2+1972> accessed 25 February 2015.
30. Zaheer Masani, *Indira Gandhi: A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 252, 253.
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32. Press Information Bureau photograph N94104, album July–December 1972, 'John Connally and Smt Gandhi strolling on the lawns of The Retreat where Smt Gandhi stayed. Shri Y.S. Parmar and Ambassador Keating are also seen'.
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35. 'Pak must respond to global call to end terrorism: PM', *The Hindu*, 25 March 2002; 'Rs 200 cr. Central grant for Himachal'; and 'POTO in the Nation's Interest', 26 March 2002; and interview with Kanwar Yogendra, *The Hindu* correspondent who attended the press conference, August 2014.
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41. Interview with Yogendra Chandra, 19 November 2014.
42. Notification of His Excellency the Governor-General's Visit to Simla—June 1949, from the Office of the Military Secretary to the Governor-General, Rajaji Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi.
43. Interview with Tara Gandhi-Bhattacharya, 23 August 2014.
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45. Main Special Train Party (3) Allotment of Seat in the First and Second Rail-motors from Notification of His Excellency the Governor-General's visit....



The Retreat is lit up as evening falls

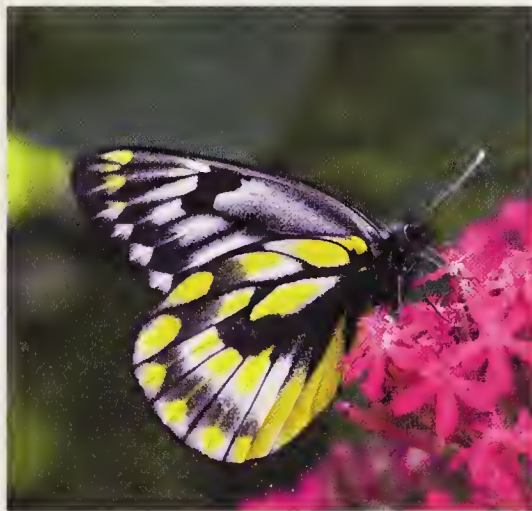
46. Interview with Rear Admiral Kirpal Singh, 15 August 2014.
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50. Interview with Dr Mohini Giri, 29 January 2015.
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52. Interview with Lakshmi Venkatraman, 25 February 2015.
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Grand Duchess, Euthalia patala

BUTTERFLIES OF THE RETREAT

Peter Smetacek



Pale Jezebel, Delias sanaca

Rajashree Bhuyan and I surveyed the estate of The Retreat, Mashobra, on 22 and 23 September 2014. We recorded a total of 41 species of butterflies. With the inclusion of a Spangle photographed there in May the same year, and the Common Map, Great Blackvein, Common Spotted Flat, Painted Lady, Large Cabbage White, Pale Jezebel and Grand Duchess, photographed in June 2015, a total of 49 species have now been reported.

PAPILIONIDAE	Himalayan Sergeant	Grand Duchess	Common Copper
Common Yellow	<i>Athyma opalina</i> (5+)	<i>Euthalia patala</i> (1)	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i> (5+)
Swallowtail <i>Papilio machaon</i> (1)	Creamy Sailer		White-bordered Copper
Common Mormon	<i>Neptis soma</i> (1)	PIERIDAE	<i>Lycaena panava</i> (5+)
<i>Papilio polytes</i> (2)	Pallas' Sailer <i>Neptis sappho</i> (2)	Himalayan Brimstone	Sorrel Sapphire
Spangle <i>Papilio protenor</i> (1)	Chestnut Tiger	<i>Gonepteryx nepalensis</i> (5+)	<i>Heliophorus sena</i> (5+)
	<i>Parantica sita</i> (1)	Dark Clouded Yellow	Orange bordered Argus
NYMPHALIDAE	Dark Blue Tiger <i>Tirumala septentrionis</i> (1)	<i>Colias fieldii</i> (5+)	<i>Aricia agestis</i> (1)
Large Silverstripe	Ringed Argus <i>Callerebia aumanda</i> (10+)	Common Grass Yellow	Dusky Hedge Blue
<i>Argynnis childreni</i> (1)	Striated Satyr <i>Aulocera saraswati</i> (4+)	<i>Eurema hecabe</i> (1)	<i>Arletta vardhana</i> (5+)
Common Silverstripe	Common Satyr	Indian Cabbage White	Large Hedge Blue
<i>Argynnis kamala</i> (1)	<i>Aulocera sivalia</i> (2)	<i>Artogeia canidia</i> (10+)	<i>Celastrina hugeli</i> (5+)
Queen of Spain Fritillary	Common Woodbrown	Large Cabbage White	Hill Hedge Blue
<i>Issoria lathonia</i> (1)	<i>Lethe sidonis</i> (20+)	<i>Pieris brassicae</i> (1)	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i> (1)
Common Leopard	Himalayan Fiverring	Hill Jezebel <i>Delias helladonna</i> (2)	Common Hedge Blue
<i>Phalautia phalaetha</i> (5+)	<i>Ypthima nikaea</i> (1)	Pale Jezebel <i>Delias sanaca</i> (1)	<i>Acytolepis puspa</i> (1)
Indian Tortoiseshell <i>Aglais caschmirensis</i> (10+)	Common Wall	Great Blackvein, <i>Aporia agathon phryxe</i> (1)	Silver Hairstreak
Indian Red Admiral	<i>Lasiommata schakra</i> (4+)		<i>Inomataozephyrus syla</i> (10+)
<i>Vanessa indica</i> (5+)	Beak Libythea <i>lepita/ myrrha</i> (1)	RIODINIDAE	HESPERIIDAE
Blue Admiral	Common Map <i>Cyrestis thyodamas</i> (1)	Common Punch	Yellow Spot Swift
<i>Kaniska canace</i> (1)	Painted Lady	<i>Dodona durga</i> (2)	<i>Polytremis eltola</i> (4+)
Chocolate Pansy	<i>Vanessa cardui</i> (1)	Tailed Punch <i>Dodona eugenes</i> (1)	Swift <i>Baoris sp.</i> (1)
<i>Junonia iplita</i> (2)		LYCAENIDAE	Common Spotted Flat
Peacock Pansy			<i>Celaenorrhinus leucocera</i> (1)
<i>Junonia almana</i> (1)			

Four important points come out from the survey.

1. Spangle *Papilio protenor*: 'Has been recorded as occurring between Kashmir and Kumaon, but I have no personal knowledge of its having been taken anywhere west of Mussoorie. It is not common even there and would be still rarer to the west (DE RHE PHILIPPE, 1931)'. This would make the present photograph of this species by Gillian Wright the first confirmed record from the Shimla area.

2. Common Mormon *Papilio polytes*: 'Not uncommon in the plains and the lower hills, where I have seen it within a few

miles of Kalka; but it doesn't, as far as my experience goes, extend to any distance into the hills (DE RHE PHILIPE, 1931)'. This would make the two specimens observed on 23 September 2014 the first record of this butterfly from Shimla.

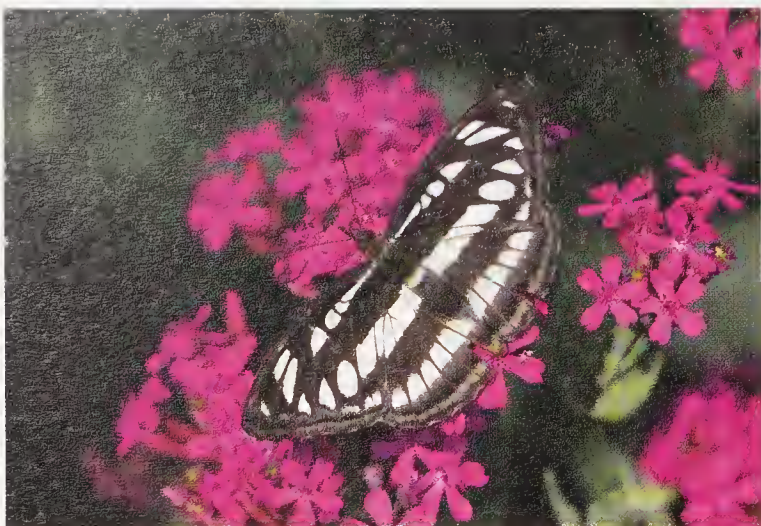
3. Peacock Pansy *Junonia almana*: 'Exceedingly abundant in the plains and lower hills, but doesn't appear to venture freely into the higher ranges. I have seen one or two of the wet season "asterie" form in the valleys below Simla, but have no note of any appearance in Simla itself (DE RHE PHILIPE 1931)'. The present specimen is the first record of this species from Shimla.

4. Further surveys are likely to yield much new information on the butterfly fauna of Shimla and the possibility of re-locating colonies of locally rare species like the Common Blue Apollo and the White Admiral would be of significance to the long-term conservation of these species, since the president's estate is a protected area and will continue to be protected in the foreseeable future.

MOTHS OF THE RETREAT, MASHOBRA

We also surveyed moths during the same period. I identified a total of 65 species among those we collected, with three new records for the Shimla area. Photographs of the Hummingbird Hawkmoths, *Cephonodes hylas* and *Macroglossum nycteris*, taken in June 2015 by Andre Fanthome increased the total to 67.

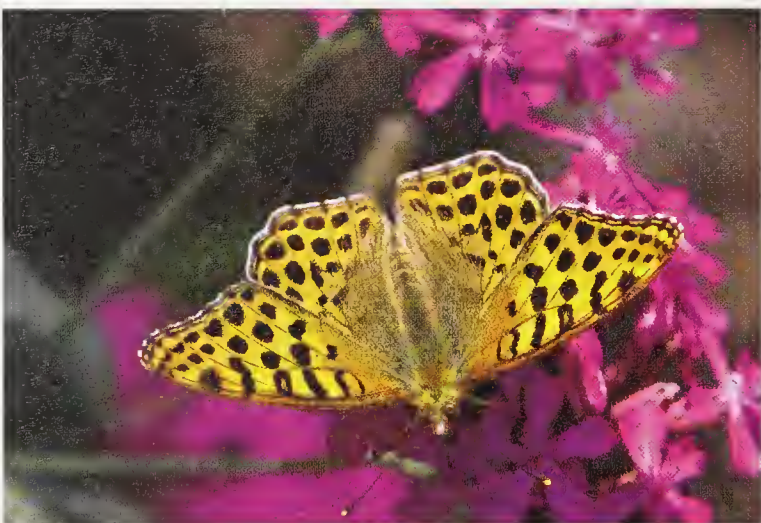
SPHINGIDAE	CALLIDULIDAE	<i>Aletia distincta</i>	<i>Polydesma boarnioides</i>
<i>Acherontia styx</i>	<i>Pterodecta anchora</i>	<i>Aletia duplicata</i>	<i>Daddala</i> sp.
<i>Psilogrammia menephron</i>		<i>Aletia sinuosa</i>	<i>Spirama retorta</i>
<i>Hippotion boerhaviae</i>	GEOMETRIDAE	<i>Aletia decisissima</i>	<i>Artena dotata</i>
<i>Theretra alecto</i>	<i>Tanaorrhinus reciprocata</i>	<i>Lophoptera squamigerata</i>	Sub-family Arctiinae
<i>Cephonodes hylas</i>	<i>Archaeobalbis</i> sp.	<i>Condica</i> cf. <i>illecta</i>	<i>Argina astrea</i>
<i>Macroglossum nycteris</i>	<i>Urapteryx</i> cf. <i>ebuleata</i>	<i>Aedia lencomelas</i>	<i>Spilarctia rhodophila</i>
	<i>Urapteryx</i> cf. <i>clara</i>	<i>Phlogophora albovittata</i>	<i>Lithosia antica</i>
LASIOCAMPIDAE	<i>Odontopera</i> cf. <i>heydena</i>		<i>Chrysorhabdia bivitta</i>
<i>Trabala vishnou</i>	<i>Odontopera</i> cf. <i>kanchai</i>	EREBIDAE	<i>Phissama transiens</i>
	<i>Eustroma melancholica</i>	<i>Catocala</i> cf. <i>inconstans</i>	<i>Lemyra neglecta</i>
DREPANIDAE	<i>venipicta</i>	<i>Anua tirhaca</i>	<i>Cyana arama</i>
<i>Macroclix mysticata</i>	<i>Opisthograptis mollerii</i>	<i>Achaea janata</i>	<i>Cyana adita</i>
<i>Tridrepana sadana</i>	(new record)	<i>Ophiura triphaenoides</i>	Sub-family Lymantriinae
(new record)	<i>Nothomiza grata</i>	<i>Trigonodes hyppasia</i>	<i>Euproctis</i> sp. 1
<i>Macranzata fenestraria</i>	<i>Gnophos accipitraria</i>	<i>Bastilla</i> cf. <i>crameri</i>	<i>Euproctis</i> sp. 2
<i>Hyalospectera hyalinata</i>	<i>Xanthorhoe</i> sp.	<i>Trichosea champa</i>	<i>Lymantria concolor</i>
(new record)	<i>Medasina albidaria</i>	<i>Disepholcia caerulea</i>	
		<i>Trachea auripleva</i>	HYPSIDAE
ZYGAENIDAE	NOCTUIDAE	<i>Mocis undata</i>	<i>Asota producta</i>
<i>Agalope hyalina</i>	<i>Xestia semiherbida</i>	<i>Tiracola plagiata</i>	<i>Asota caricae</i>
<i>Soritia leptalina</i>	<i>Trichoplusia orichalcea</i>	<i>Actinotia polyodon</i>	
	<i>Penicillaria</i> cf. <i>inextricata</i>	<i>Anclumis inextricata</i>	



Himalayan Sergeant, Athyma opalina



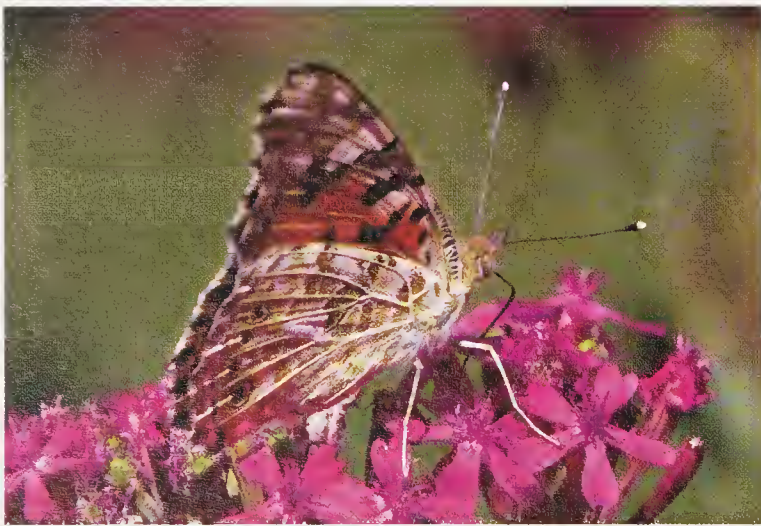
Common Satyr, Aulocera swaha



Queen of Spain Fritillary, Issoria lathonia



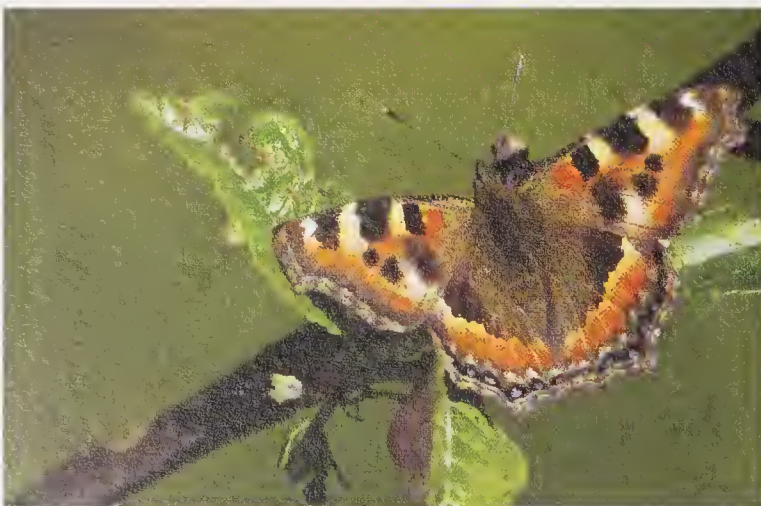
Hedge Blue, Celastrina sp.



Painted Lady, Vanessa cardui



Large Cabbage White, Artogeia Pieris brassicae



Indian Tortoiseshell, Aglais caschmirensis



Cephonodes hylas (Pellucid Hawkmoth)



Common Map, *Cyrestis thyodamas*



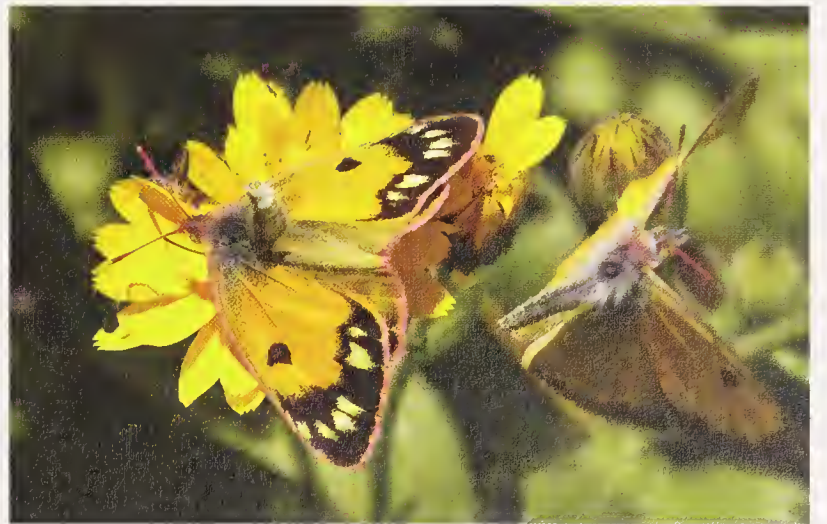
Common Spotted Flat, *Celaenorrhinus leucocera*



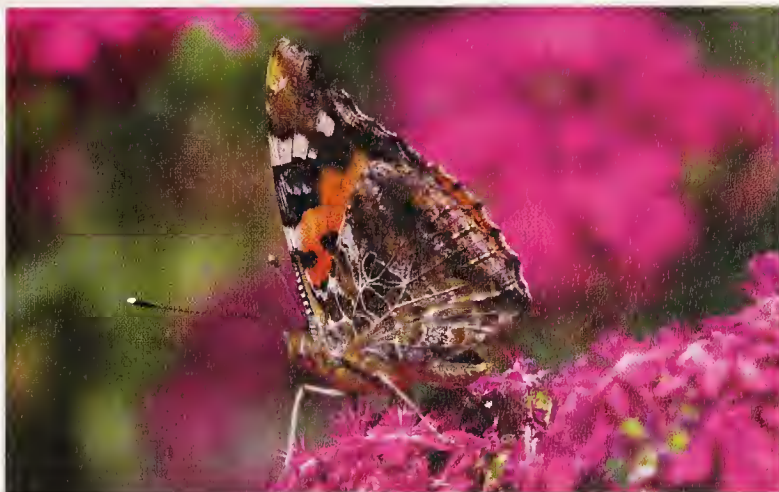
Himalayan Brimstone, *Gonepteryx nepalensis*



Dark Clouded Yellow, *Colias fieldii*



Dark Clouded Yellow, *Colias fieldii*



Indian Red Admiral, *Vanessa indica*



CHAPTER V

THE SUPREME COMMANDER'S SOUTHERN RETREAT: BOLARUM

Anuradha Naik

In a sleepy, mainly agrarian precinct of the Deccan, Bolarum is a quiet space that has changed little over the span of two centuries. Here the president's southern retreat, the Rashtrapati Nilayam, is an island of peace and calm, aloof from the urbanisation that surrounds it and is beating at its doors.

Bolarum today is a part of the Secunderabad cantonment and headquarters of the Indian army's Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME). It came under the jurisdiction of the army's Southern Command in 1948. Prior to being merged with Secunderabad, it had been an active cantonment in its own right for over a hundred years. The story of both Secunderabad and Bolarum is inextricably linked to the expansion of the East India Company in the Deccan and the treaties the Company signed with the nizams of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty in the 18th and 19th centuries. While the East India Company's troops were stationed in Secunderabad, the contingents at Bolarum were for many decades the nizam's, and the men came from the Deccan, although they were commanded by British officers and marched to the orders of the East India Company. Bolarum therefore developed its own distinct character, drawing both from the nizams who owned it and from the British who administered it. It became a hybrid of the nizam's capital, Hyderabad, and the very British Secunderabad.

Its distance from the capital Hyderabad, its topography of flat plains, unlike the rocky and sometimes uninhabitable terrain of the Deccan, and its location, which created a finely balanced tension with adjoining Secunderabad, were all tactical and guided by early 19th-century military planning.

The Durbar Hall at the Chowmahalla Palace, the Asaf Jahi seat of power, as it is today



ABOVE: Mir Qamaruddin Khan, Nizam ul Mulk, Asaf Jah I (1713–1748), was a Mughal general who was made the subedar of the Deccan. Painting, oil on canvas, digital reprint [Source: The Choumahalla Palace Collection]

TOP LEFT: The Deccani landscape around Bolarum. The relatively flat plains here made it ideal for a military base. The Karkhana road that connects Secunderabad to Bolarum. C. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal & Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private collection, author]

TOP RIGHT: Nawab Mir Mahbub Ali Khan, Nizam VI, inspecting the guard of the Hyderabad Contingent. c. 1900 Raja Deen Dayal & Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

Strategically located in Bolarum was the house of the resident, the representative in Hyderabad state of first the East India Company and later the British Crown. This house, formerly known as the Residency House, is today Rashtrapati Nilayam. It too, like the cantonment, is an amalgam of two very distinct cultures—the nizami and the British.

The history of Bolarum is long forgotten, and even that of Secunderabad has been little studied. Large areas of both cantonments are out of bounds for the general public, and as a result of their isolation, as well as the army's respect for tradition, much of the original 19th-century landscape and many of the remarkable buildings of the period are intact. In this chapter we shall rediscover them as well as the origins of the cantonments, their relationship with Hyderabad, and their increased importance over time.

CHECKMATE NIZAM

Tracing his descent to the first Caliph Abu Bakr, Nawab Abid Quli Khan, the forebear of the Asaf Jahi dynasty, came to the court of the Mughal emperor Shahjahan in 1658. In 1713 his grandson, Mir Qamaruddin Khan was made subedar of the Deccan, with the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah. As Mughal power disintegrated, that of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the first of the nizams, increased. His territory extended over the whole of the Indian peninsula from the River Tapti to the borders of Mysore, the Carnatic and down to Trichinopoly. Wary of threats from the Marathas to the west, from Mysore to the south and the likelihood of invasion from the north, he increased the number of soldiers in his army to one lakh.¹ Another reason for such a large force was to counter the growing influence of the French and the British.

Nizam Ali Khan (1762–1803), officially recognised as the second nizam, moved his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad in 1763. Three years later he signed the first of a series of treaties with the East India Company in which he and his successors paid or ceded territory to secure the services of Company troops. Nizam Ali Khan, however, continued to play the British off against the French. In

1786, he employed the French captain, J.M. Raymond, to raise a force of 10,000 soldiers. Raymond also started making cannons in Hyderabad and the locality is still known as Gunfoundry. Interestingly Monsieur Raymond, as he was fondly known, became a popular cult figure, revered by both Hindus and Muslims. Locally christened Musa Ram, his tomb in the old city is still visited by scores of Hyderabadis even today.

The nizam retained a French military contingent until 1798, when he was persuaded to dispense with the services of Raymond and sign a Subsidiary Alliance Treaty with the East India Company. This was the first of a series of alliances masterminded by Richard Wellesley, the governor-general who built the Government House, Kolkata. Wellesley's main aim was to put an end to French influence. The nizam's chief objective was to protect his dominions from the constant threat of the Marathas. While the treaty failed to provide the necessary security to the nizam, it ensured British presence in Hyderabad for the next century and a half. The strength of the Company's army in the nizam's territories, now known as the Subsidiary Force, was increased to 6,000 sepoys and with it the sum that the nizam paid the British for its maintenance.

A year later, the British made official the position of Resident to the Hyderabad court. John Holland, the Company's first diplomatic envoy to Hyderabad, now became the first of a line of 53 residents. He was to advise and assist the nizam in his administration and take charge of his army and of the Company troops there. His duties were also to gain "the Nizam's goodwill and esteem" and "to keep a watchful eye upon His Highness's conduct and to endeavour by every means . . . to establish confidential and friendly communication between the two governments".²

During the final Anglo-Mysore war against Tipu Sultan, the nizam allied with the British and his forces fought beside theirs. Among those who fought the hardest were infantry men from the Deccan, many of who had been trained by Monsieur Raymond, and the nizam's Irregular Force,



Chowmahalla Palace. The iconic Mecca Masjid and the Charminar, are seen in the background to the right



the Nazm-i-Jamaiat, consisting of troops of Arab, Pathan and Sikh origin. Both served under Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, who recommended that the contingent be maintained and paid for during times of peace, so it 'might be competent to preserve order within the confines of His Highness' own territory'.³ Both these forces became the nucleus of the Nizam's Contingent established under a treaty of 1800, which was to make Bolarum its base. The same treaty also added two battalions of infantry and one regiment of cavalry, with considerable artillery, to the Subsidiary Force, and the nizam was forced to cede more territory to pay for them.

Further demands were made by the British on the nizam in the guise of various treaties. Taxes levied on British goods were reduced to 5 per cent, and later abolished. The nizam was prohibited from entering into political negotiations with other states, and if perchance such a situation arose, the British government would be the arbiter in his disputes with other powers.⁴ Originally sent to Hyderabad only as a goodwill ambassador, the resident's influence soon became such that in due course he entered almost every aspect of the nizam's government, reducing the latter ultimately to a puppet king.

'NIZZY PAYS FOR ALL'⁵

By the time the third nizam, Sikander Jah (1803–29), ascended the masnad, the British had secured their position as an important political force in Hyderabad. While the second half of the 18th century had been marred by constant warfare, the emergence of the East India Company as the paramount power in the Deccan brought stability to the city, stimulated growth and also provided an opportunity for the nizam to focus on internal issues and streamline a chaotic and corrupt administration.

In 1803, at the beginning of his reign, the nizam granted land for the cantonment of Secunderabad. Eighteen miles north-east and a day's march from the walled city of Hyderabad, the Subsidiary Force's new base was named after the nizam. He also granted permission to the resident, James Achilles Kirkpatrick (1798–1805), to



build a monumental Residency House for himself and his beloved begum, Khairunissa.

Both the cantonment and the new Residency were located to the north of the River Musi and swung the city's direction of growth from south to north. Since it was made the capital in 1763, the growth of Hyderabad had been restricted to the south of the river. Now, shops and dwellings, particularly of Europeans, came up in the vicinity of the Residency at Chaderghat. Soon traders from the busy markets of the old city set up shop in the newly formed Residency Bazaar, today known as Sultan Bazaar. Half a century later the British Resident, Sir Richard Temple, recorded in his memoirs that 'originally the Residency, now surrounded by a town, was built on an open plain, and that afterwards the residents got some native bankers to settle close to it, in order to negotiate the money supplies for the payment of the Subsidiary Force.'⁶

GBE: KNIGHT GRAND CROSS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE OR 'GAVE BERAR TO THE ENGLISH'?⁷

Bolarum too was becoming an established military base. The Resident, Henry Russell (1811–20), began to reorganise a part of the nizam's own armies. In 1817, he raised a corps of regular cavalry that, along with a small troop of the nizam's, was renamed the Russell Brigade and stationed at Bolarum. This brigade too was a key part of the Nizam's Contingent.

In 1826,⁸ the various components of the contingent were reorganised into specific corps that were numbered and named. These were based in four different military stations, with Aurangabad as the headquarters. The First or Hyderabad Division at Bolarum consisted of two regiments of infantry, a corps of engineers and a



FACING PAGE: The British Residency, view from the south. The nizam granted permission to build the Residency which is north of the River Musi. For three-quarters of a century after it was built, it was accessed by crossing the river on horseback or by elephant. Hand coloured engraving, 1830, by Captain Robert Grindlay [Source: Reprint, Private collection, author]

ABOVE LEFT: March-past of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force during the visit of the prince of Wales, later George V, to Hyderabad, 1905, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

ABOVE RIGHT: The Hyderabad Contingent Cavalry, from left to right, 30th Lancers (Gordon's Horse), lance daffadar, Jat; 20th Deccan Horse, Sikhi; 29th Lancers (Deccan Horse), risaldar, Dakhani Musalman [Source: MacMunn, Major G.F and painted by Lovett, Major A.C., The Armies of India, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1911]



Mir Turab Ali Khan, Mukhtar ul Mulk, Salar Jung I (1829–1883). He became diwan of Hyderabad at the age of 24 and gained recognition for his bureaucratic efficiency. c. 1880, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Telangana State Archives]

company of artillery, with gun lascars and ordnance drivers. Under a new code of rules the contingent's orders came from the British resident acting on behalf of the nizam.

The contingent continued to grow. By 1850, it had 84 European officers and 9,397 Indians of all ranks with cantonments at Bolarum, Lingsugur, Hingoli, Mominabad, Ellichpur, Jalna, Aurangabad and Mullapur.

All this changed under the treaty of 1853. The contingent now became part of the forces of the East India Company. No longer the nizam's it was renamed the Hyderabad Contingent, and was to be an auxiliary force maintained by the British at a strength of at least 5,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and four field batteries of artillery. The rules that prevailed in the nizam's army regarding rank and promotion ceased and European officers reverted to the rank they held in the Company's armies.⁹

The Subsidiary Force's role was also redefined. It was to be 'employed when required to execute services of importance, such as protecting the persons of His Highness, his heirs and successors, and reducing to obedience all rebels and excitors of disturbance in His Highness' Dominions'.¹⁰

The expense of the Subsidiary Force had already come close to bankrupting the state on many occasions. Now to pay for the high cost of the contingent, and for certain pensions and interest on previous debts, the nizam gave to the 'exclusive management' of the Company the valuable northern districts of Berar, Dharaseo and the Raichur Doab, which were estimated to yield a gross annual revenue of Rs 50 lakhs.

Berar was never returned to the nizam. Through the subsequent treaty of 1860 it was held 'in trust' by the British and in 1902 'leased in perpetuity'. Its loss was deeply resented in Hyderabad. In 1936, after much effort, there was a symbolic victory when 'the sovereignty of the Nizam over Berar was accepted'. However,

the administration remained firmly in British hands. Renowned for its deep, rich black alluvial soil, Berar was praised in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and the 17th-century French traveller, Jean de Thevenot, described it as one of the wealthiest portions of the Mughal Empire. Its importance to the British was clear. Before the American Civil War, America supplied the British textile industry with nearly 80 per cent of its demand for cotton. After the war, American cotton exports dropped drastically, leaving the British textile industry crippled by 1862.¹¹

Cotton cultivated in Berar and sent to the factories of Manchester made good this shortfall. All other crops cultivated in the 'assigned districts' now began to be imported, so that the more profitable cotton could be grown instead. The speed and scale of this sudden prosperity was unexpected. However, the affluence witnessed in Berar never became visible in the city of Hyderabad.

After the 1853 treaty, relations with the British were strained and financial stress to the state was palpable. At this point, Mir Turab Ali Khan, Salar Jung I, became the nizam's diwan or minister. He would emerge as one of the key players in Hyderabad for the next three decades. A capable administrator, he helped restore Hyderabad's finances and introduced reforms. He would also be a presence at Bolarum.

'IF THE NIZAM GOES, ALL GOES'¹²

Meanwhile the Great Revolt of 1857 against the British unexpectedly furthered the fortunes of the cantonment of Secunderabad.

At 6 pm on 17 July that year, at the height of the Revolt, a faction of Rohillas and Arabs, under Jamadar Turabaz Khan and Moulvi Allaudin, attempted to break down the gates of the Hyderabad Residency. Fired on by the troops stationed in the Residency, they scattered. The Resident, Colonel Davidson, communicated the events of that evening to the political secretary to the Government of India the very next day.¹

Rumours relating to the attack ascribed it to the anti-British sentiment prevailing at the time, to local politics, 'and a view to bust Salar Jung', the dynamic pro-British diwan.² Davidson obtained adequate reinforcements from Secunderabad and Arab troops were sent by Salar Jung to quell any further disturbance. Davidson remained sceptical of the loyalty of any native troops, and injected the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force with European reinforcements, for he considered it, as he wrote in a letter to the governor-general, 'of the most paramount importance with reference to the continuance of peace in Southern India that we should hold our own at Hyderabad'. The new nizam, Afzal-ud-Daula (1857–69), was guided largely by Salar Jung. The latter extended full support to the British and the insurgency failed.

As a result of the events at Hyderabad, and after the fall of Delhi in the north, the Residency took on a new identity. Its low brick boundary walls gave way to lofty stone ones. Now representing the British Empire, it was fortified, three bastions were constructed and an overawing Martello tower became the principal entrance to the building designed by the romantic Kirkpatrick.

The potential of Secunderabad as a strong military position was now recognised and the second half of the 19th century saw tremendous acceleration in its growth. Within a century it became the second largest city of the nizam's dominions.

SECUNDERABAD: GLITTERING IN THE BRIGHT SUN

Not much is known about Secunderabad prior to its occupation by the Subsidiary Force except that it was a small village known as Husain Shahpura.¹² The Subsidiary Force had been stationed there from 1798¹³ even before it was named Secunderabad. Known locally as *lashkar* or military encampment, the cantonment was an 'intrusion of unadulterated Englishness in the utterly Indian landscape'.¹⁴

In the 1839 novel by Philips Meadows Taylor, *The Confessions of a Thug*, the main protagonist, Amir Ali, visits

Secunderabad in the early 19th century and describes the old settlement of Alwal, famous for its temple, 'Its white pagoda peeping from among the groves of tamarind and mango trees . . .'. He continues, 'and pursuing our way, we saw on passing a ridge of rocks the camp of the army at the far-famed Hoosain Sagor or, as it is more often called, Secunderabad. The tents of the English glittered in the bright sun . . .'.¹⁵

From 1853 Secunderabad was the headquarters of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force, which in turn constituted a division of the Madras Army. At that time the total military force stationed there consisted of one regiment of British cavalry, one battery of Royal Horse Artillery, two batteries of field artillery, one elephant battery, a unit of the Royal Engineers, two regiments of British infantry, a regiment of Native cavalry, one company of sappers and miners and four regiments of Native infantry.¹⁶

Until the Great Revolt, these occupied temporary barracks, tents and huts covering a distance of approximately three miles.¹⁷ The widespread construction of pucca structures, though required earlier as the number of military personnel increased, only began after 1857.

The cantonment grew along a central east-west road called the Parade (today the Rashtrapati Road), on either side of which were located the officers' houses. It was intersected by roads running north-south that led to the bazaars, the sepoys' lines and the parade ground. On the east were located the infantry lines and to the west was the artillery. The extensive parade ground, used today not only by the army but also by the state government for the official hoisting of the tricolour, is located on a gentle incline, and bounded by a rivulet to the north. Two small bridges cross over it and lead on to the artillery lines of Trimulgherry and beyond that to Bolarum. The main bazaar, Suddar or General Bazaar—even today Secunderabad's largest—is located to the south of the Parade. The famous Tivoli theatre is situated on the edge of the parade ground. The Public Rooms that became the Secunderabad Club were originally located at this site.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The Secunderabad Club, c. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]; the old temple at Alwal, the oldest recorded structure in the region of Bolarum which belonged to the Maharaja Kishen Pershad family. 1900, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]; the maidan at Secunderabad with the 'glittering white tents' of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force. c. 1885, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private collection, author]; a panoramic view of the infantry barracks at Secunderabad. c. 1880, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private collection, author]; and panoramic view of Trimulgherry, c. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private collection, author]

THE ENTRENCHMENT

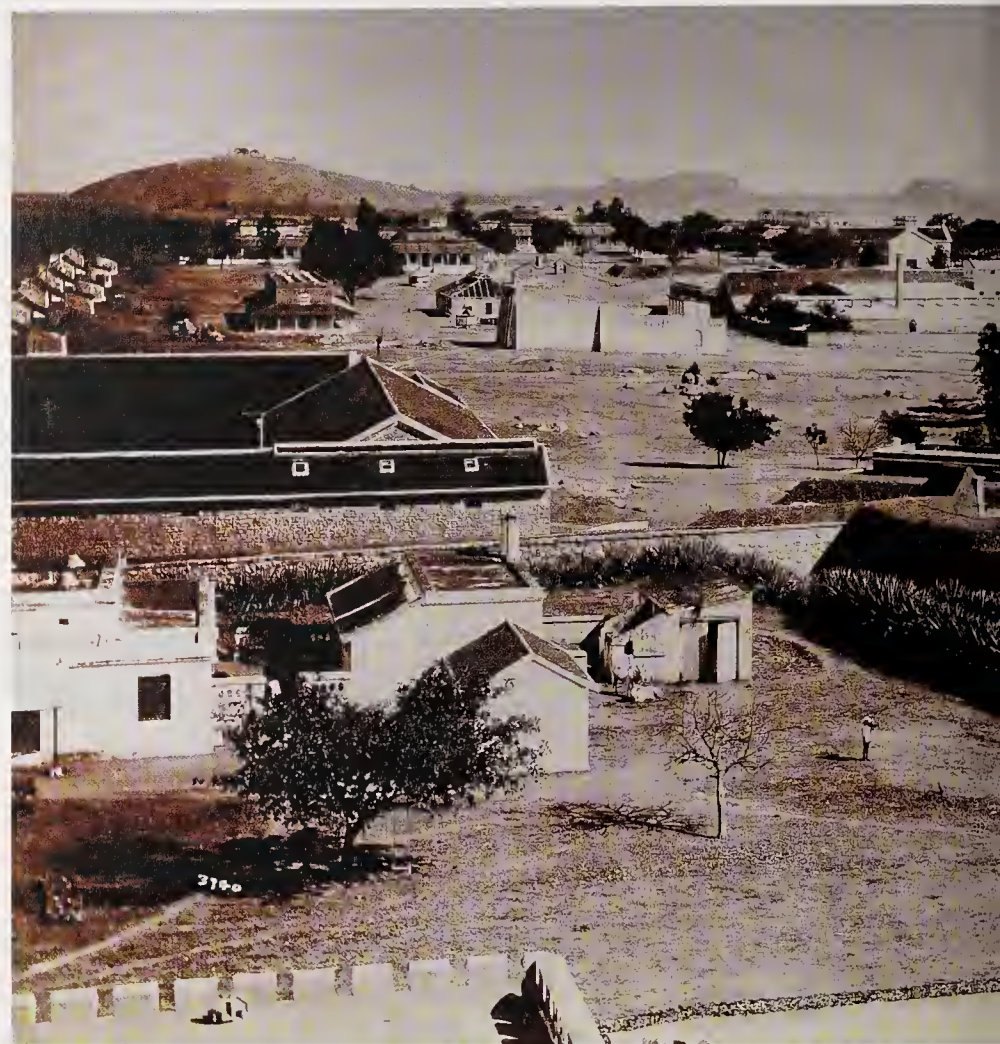
Most of the British troops were stationed at Trimulgherry where the first permanent structure was the All Saints' Church, built in the neo-Gothic style and completed in 1860.

Across from the church, and perhaps the most interesting of all structures in the cantonment is the Trimulgherry Entrenchment. Even before it was thrown up, it created a stir. On 6 October 1858 *The Englishman* reported that, '... rumour is that the English are building a fort in Secunderabad Cantonment with an ulterior object . . . designed to give the English Government a predominant influence, if not domination over the Nizam's country and subjects, perhaps direct usurpation of his sovereignty. They are certainly entrenching in the cantonment with a view to its future security. . . This is done after 60 years during which the subsidiary troops have occupied an open cantonment accessible on all sides without any protection but that of the ordinary guards to their public buildings and arsenals.'¹⁸

Following such reports, the resident was summoned by the nizam and had to clarify that the entrenchment was of mud construction and meant only to provide protection to Europeans in Secunderabad, Trimulgherry and Bolarum should the occasion arise.¹⁹ Work on the entrenchment commenced in 1860 and was completed in 1867.

Its outer walls, still standing to this day, are approximately four kilometres in circumference and surrounded by a wide moat nearly two metres deep. The stone revetment to the inner side of the moat has several bastions with iron slits for placing guns. There are four main entrances, each named after historic Indian battles, with iron gates and drawbridges at each.

Within the entrenchment of the mud fort were barracks, messes, offices and stores for one complete regiment. The fort was amply supplied with water from wells, and contained a commissariat store and a bakery, capable of holding sufficient provisions for the force located here to last for 12 months.²⁰ Today the fort serves as the military hospital.

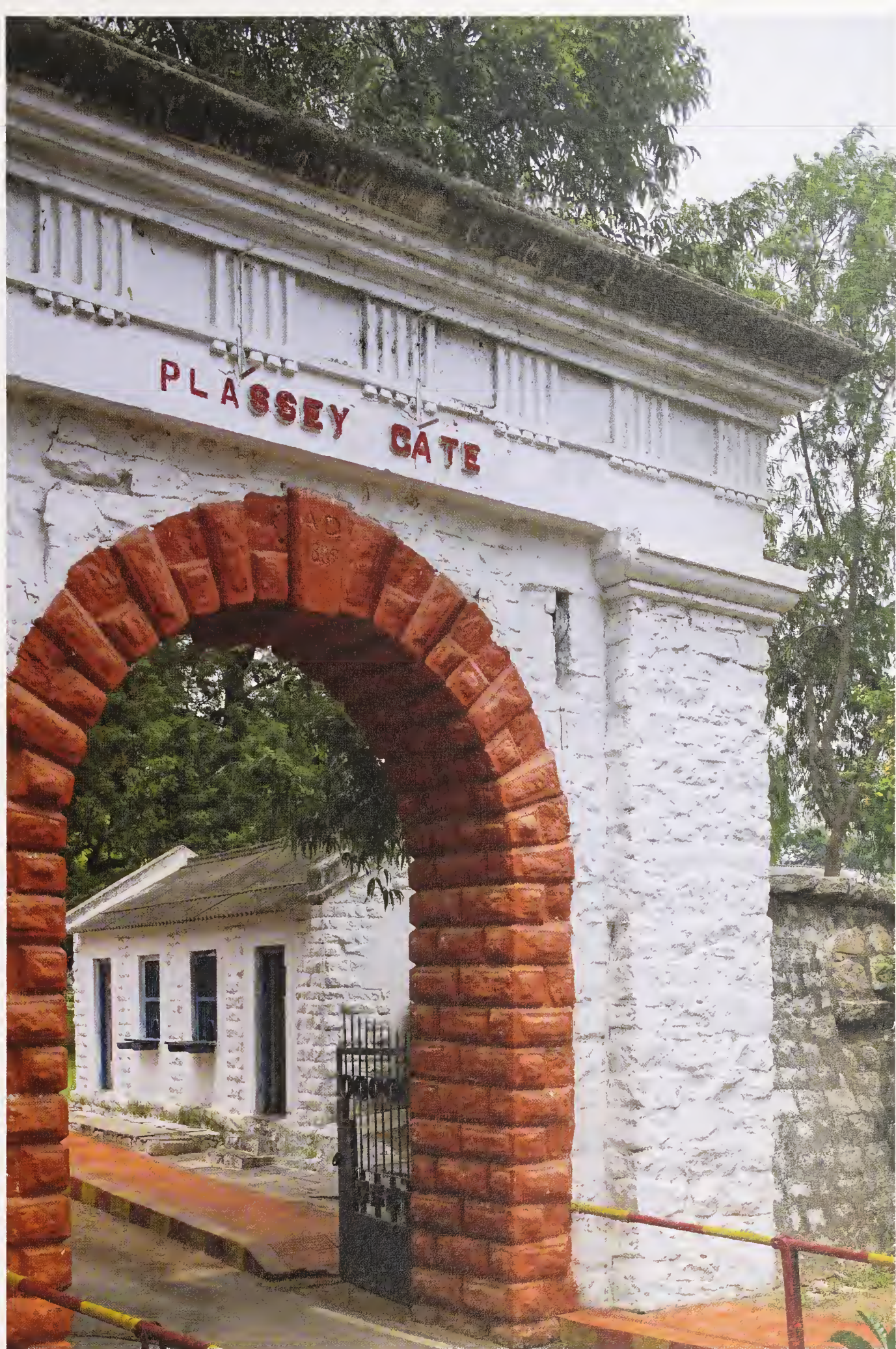


ABOVE: The entrenchment, with a circumference of four kilometres, meant to provide protection to Europeans in Secunderabad, was completed in 1867. C. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private Collection, Author]

RIGHT: The watch-tower with loopholes at the IVth bastion of the fort

FACING PAGE: One of the main gates to the old fort, which is today the Secunderabad Military Hospital





THE MILITARY REFORMATORY

To the west of the entrenchment is the military reformatory or prison, also completed in 1867 and popularly known as 'Windsor Castle'.²¹ It is an imposing building with a fortified medieval-style gateway, high walls, Tudoresque turrets and cruciform arrow slits for fenestration. Constructed in the form of a cross, with a tower in the centre, each of its four arms has two storeys and a total of 75 cells. On the third floor of the tower is the gallows room. A similar prison, the infamous Cellular Jail or Kala Pani was later constructed in the Andamans, the difference being that Indian soldiers were sent there and soldiers of British origin were imprisoned here. Interestingly, most of the Reformatory's early prisoners were sentenced for selling their clothes, the punishment for which was six months' incarceration.²² It seems to have been actively used during the Second World War, when some prisoners of war were detained here. After Independence, it was run by the Indian army and functioned as a jail until 1994 when it was handed over to the Territorial Army.

At the time it was built, Secunderabad was under the direct administration of the British resident, and there are several entries relating to construction works in the memoirs of Sir Richard Temple. In June 1867, Temple recorded 'the fine view of the Trimalgiri eminence, crowned with (the new artillery) barrack structures'. He inspected the bazaars that 'seemed in fair order and the Station generally very clean and smart' but 'the huts and houses of the men, both on horse and foot, had wretched thatches, and seemed to want tiles. Better conservancy in the outskirts of the Station was also wanted, and had recently been arranged for'. Shortly after, he also checked other newly constructed buildings, along with the chief engineer, Major Price. They saw, he wrote, 'the married quarters for the Artillery, the Church and the English School-Room, the Roman Catholic Chapel, the Presbyterian Church, the Soldiers Club and Reading Room, and the new barracks for the 108th Regiment. We also went over the newly finished prison for soldiers, which had 37 inmates, not an excessive number for so large a force. I finished by seeing the Soldiers Reading Room of the 21st Fusiliers which was



much frequented, and I was told that a great majority of the men in the regiment were able to read and write.'²³

With the development of the cantonment, the civilian population that serviced it also grew. In 1862, a Civil Magistrate's Court for Secunderabad, separate from the civil courts at Hyderabad, was set up and a British superintendent of police with his constabulary replaced the 'Cutwalle' (*kotwal*).²⁴ Educational institutions like St. Anne's Convent (1856) and Mahbub College (1861) were established, and the official language of the town was English, unlike the Persian and later Urdu in Hyderabad.

Markets thrived and British and European stores set up business in Secunderabad. There was no import duty on shops here and it became a centre for supplying luxury European goods. By 1867, Secunderabad had at least 60,000 inhabitants, besides the military force. Its imports were over Rs 50 lakhs annually, coming in largely via Mumbai (then known as Bombay). In comparison, Hyderabad had 350,000 inhabitants and imports worth Rs 8 lakhs a year, but the purchasing power of the rich nobility was immense. The total imports were valued at nearly one and half million pounds sterling and this was one of two important reasons for connecting Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Bolarum to the Great Indian Peninsular Railway running from Mumbai to Chennai (then known as Madras).²⁵ The other objective was, as described by Major Price, secretary to the Resident, 'certain special military advantages'.²⁶ These related to the large arsenal at Secunderabad with stores not only of the Subsidiary Force



ABOVE LEFT: Percy's Hotel, popular with the British officers stationed at Secunderabad. The Secunderabad branch of Hyderabad's oldest and most famous departmental store, A. Abid & Co., was adjacent to it. The building was demolished in the 1980s. C. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

ABOVE: The Secunderabad Railway Station. C. 1875, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

BELOW: A panoramic view of the Artillery Lines, Trimulgherry. Resident Sir Richard Temple describes this view in his memoirs. C. 1880, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: Private collection, author]



The Military Reformatory, the cellular jail at Trimmulgherry. It is believed that the jail in the Andamans, the 'kala paani', was constructed along its lines



but also for the whole of the Hyderabad Contingent. A railway line would greatly reduce land transportation costs.

In 1870, an agreement was concluded between the British government and the nizam for laying the line connecting Hyderabad to the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. The main points of the agreement were that the Hyderabad state was to provide the capital necessary for the construction, maintenance and the working of the railway, including provision of land, payment of compensation, and cost of survey, and that the British government would lay and manage the railway on behalf of the nizam, who in turn would receive all profits derived from the venture.²⁷

The sites for the stations were also carefully selected, ensuring that they would be within the Secunderabad cantonment limits. The Hyderabad station was located away from the old city, making it easier to defend in case of any disturbance in the city.²⁸

The Secunderabad-Wadi line covering a distance of 166 kilometres was inaugurated in October 1874. The coming of the railway had a profound impact on the economic structure of the Hyderabad state. Commerce formed the core of Secunderabad's economy, while in Hyderabad the feudal system prevailed. Despite these differences, the two settlements were being fused into one area through their military and economic interdependence. The last three decades of the 19th century saw explosive development in both Hyderabad and Secunderabad and accelerated the union between the two. So blurred did the boundaries get that in 1887, there was a proposal to connect the two cities with a horse-drawn tramway.²⁹

As Secunderabad transformed into a commercial centre, it developed a more liberal and western outlook than Hyderabad. European shops like the famous tailors, Burton & Co., became popular with the Hyderabad aristocracy. Through the magical lenses of Secunderabad-based photographers like Raja Deen Dayal and S. Frankel, moments of history were captured for posterity.



ABOVE: An 1852 map of the Bolarum Cantonment. Permanent structures were constructed much earlier here than at Secunderabad [Source: Fraser Lt. Gen. J.S.(compiled) Report on the Medical Topography and Statistics of the Nizam's Military Cantonments and Army, Christian Knowledge]

BELOW: Camp of Nawab Mir Mahbub Ali Khan at Bolarum in 1890. The resident, Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, (1889–1991) is seen to his left, and Nawab Shams-ul Umra and Maharaja Kishen Pershad to his right. Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

The cantonment also became a great sporting centre with its parade and polo grounds, its race course and cricket, football and hockey fields. It became a hub of social life too. In 1878, the Public Rooms became the United Services Club, and in 1903, the Secunderabad Club. Constructed on a 20-acre property gifted by Salar Jung, all military and civil officers in the service of the British government quartered in Secunderabad, Bolarum and Chaderghat were entitled to become members. Salar Jung and members of his family were granted free membership, a gesture that continues even today. Hotels like Percy's, Whitehall's and Montgomery's became an integral part of Secunderabad's urban fabric. They found mention in a letter addressed to the resident from the commanding officer at Secunderabad during the Rendition of Secunderabad to the nizami's government in 1945. In the interest of service personnel, he wanted to clarify that they would have continued access to these hotels and the concert parties held in them.^{30,31}

Secunderabad's growth was rapid yet steady and it soon earned the sobriquet of 'the twin city of Hyderabad'. In the course of the early 20th century, a Town Improvement Trust on the lines of Hyderabad's City Improvement Board was set up.³² Residential localities like the exclusive chessboard patterned Maredpally were designed, along with middle- and low-income group housing schemes.

The city also kept pace with the growth of the garrison to whose needs it particularly catered. The cantonment expanded northwards taking in the whole of Trimulgherry and extending up to Bolarum, the home of the Hyderabad Contingent.

THE HYDERABAD CONTINGENT: THE NIZAM'S OWN BUT NOT HIS OWN

As we have seen, the contingent had existed for the first half of the 19th century as the Nizam's Contingent and for the latter as the Hyderabad Contingent, an auxiliary force under the British Subsidiary Force. Its men fought alongside the Subsidiary Force as early as the Anglo-Maratha war of 1803. When the nizami and Salar Jung

sided with the British during the Great Revolt, the contingent was sent to Central India where it took part in the capture of the Madanpur Pass and the fort of Talbait, and in the sieges of Jhansi and Kalpi. There its cavalry was given the title 'Jhaz-i-Risala' as it was said to have crossed difficult terrain faster than any other regiment.

In 1876, with the British Empire firmly established, the contingent moved to bases closer to the headquarters of the British Subsidiary Force at Secunderabad. Bolarum, adjoining Secunderabad, was now finally made its headquarters. In April 1903, the status of the contingent again changed and it was formally incorporated into the regular Indian army, with only Bolarum, Aurangabad and Ellichpur being retained as cantonments. Furthermore, in 1904, the distinct cantonment of Bolarum was merged into that of the ever-expanding Secunderabad.

CHINNA LASHKAR: A VERY PRETTY LITTLE CANTONMENT

The 1901 Census reported that the combined population of Bolarum and Trimulgherry was 12,888 and it would not have been very much more three years later when the two cantonments merged.³³ It was always a small military cantonment, and was given the epithet, *chinna lashkar* or small encampment (*chinna* meaning small in Telugu), by the locals. As civilians found the much larger Secunderabad more attractive, Bolarum's own civilian population remained small.

The first mention of troops in this area comes from November 1782 when the nizami's army 'marched 6 krohs (also kos, approximately 12 miles) from Gosha-Mahal, a suburb in Hyderabad, to Alwal',³⁴ a village adjoining Bolarum. Bolarum itself first became a military base when the Russell Brigade was formed.

Tactically located on the north-western extremity of the Secunderabad cantonment, the British Subsidiary Force stood between the nizami's troops at Bolarum and Hyderabad. In addition to the location, the relatively flat terrain was suitable for army training and parades.



ABOVE: The Retreat. Constructed in 1875, Sir Winston Churchill stayed here as a young subaltern, when he visited Secunderabad to play polo

LEFT: One of Bolarum's grey painted stone bungalows, constructed in 1877

Bolarum was, and still remains, pastoral. Situated 1,890 feet about sea level, the plain was roughly seven miles in circumference and surrounded by paddy fields and tanks. The temperature, averaged in 1852, ranged from 10 to 32 degrees, always a few degrees cooler than Hyderabad. Interestingly, in 1907, a proposal for the electrification of the cantonment was scrutinised by the Military Supply Department. It was noted that traditional *punkahs* were used for only about two and a half months in the year.³⁵

Owing to this cool climate, Bolarum also became, apart from a military base, the nearest 'health resort' for Europeans in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. A record of the Medical Topographic Reports of the nizam's army commented, 'Though at so short a distance from Secunderabad and only sixty feet more elevated, still Bolarum has always been remarkable for its salubrity and freedom from the periodical visitations of Fever so prevalent at the Headquarters of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force.'³⁶

Acutely conscious and weary of the poor hygienic conditions in the old city of Hyderabad, for the British, 'the most striking features of the place, at first sight, are its remarkable resemblance to an English village, and its noticeable cleanliness . . . (the authorities at Bolarum) . . . insist on the hedge-rows being trimmed down to a certain height, so as to keep the place free and open to all beneficial breezes, and white wash being freely used upon the dwellings, barracks, and out-houses'. Adding to the charm was that 'the gardens produce most kinds of European vegetables in perfection besides the common Indian fruits. Mangoes, pineapples and strawberries grow here in great perfection.'³⁷

The cantonment boasted its own public gardens. Situated at its heart these had tennis and badminton courts and there were bandstands where regimental bands would play. As one observer wrote, 'Occasionally, the string band of the Contingent affords the public a musical treat, and that it is a treat may be gathered from the fact that this combination of musicians, numbering in all some fifty players, is regarded as the finest and most accomplished in South India'.³⁸

Unlike Secunderabad, where permanent structures came up in the second half of the 19th century, construction activity in Bolarum commenced earlier.

A hospital and medical school were established in 1841. Described as 'a lofty, well-ventilated building', the hospital accommodated 150 patients but functioned for only a few years. The Bolarum medical and dental centres are still located in this area.

The station had residences for officers in large, clearly demarcated compounds and barracks for the infantry and cavalry. The most prominent of the houses were the resident's house known as the Residency, the house of his First Assistant, and the houses of the nizam and Salar Jung. These were amongst the earliest structures built and are discussed in detail in the following chapter. The other houses and their walls were painted a uniform grey and interestingly retain the same colour today.

A golf course was set up in 1888 on 200 acres to the north of the Residency, and membership was affiliated to the Secunderabad Club. Today, however, this 18-hole course is with the army and is now called the Bison Environmental Park and Training Area (BEPTA). Bolarum also had a cricket field and polo grounds, 'and everything else tending to make life worth living in India, as British officers and sportsmen understand it'.³⁹ In the countryside were leopards, bears and wild boar and a popular sport amongst the officers was hunting and riding after these with spears. Once a leopard sprang 'in broad daylight . . . into a room in which six officers were assembled'. Panthers were also spotted in the grounds of Salar Jung's residence, and on several occasions near an obelisk on a hillock in an area of the Residency grounds that is now part of the golf course. This huge stone obelisk stands in memory of Major Adolphus Byam, military secretary to the Resident, who died at the Cape of Good Hope in 1839.

The neo-Gothic Holy Trinity Church, dating from 1846, is another of the early cantonment buildings. It was constructed on land donated by the nizam, the cost of construction being borne by Queen Victoria. Nearly a

century and a half later, Queen Elizabeth II visited the church with her husband, Prince Philip.

Also known as the Gothic Revival or the Victorian style, the neo-Gothic style began in England in the 1740s. As it reached the peak of its popularity in the 19th century, interest in it spread rapidly to the continents of Europe, Asia, South America and also to the Indian subcontinent. It is not surprising that it was the choice for the ecclesiastical architecture of both cantonments, built predominantly during the same period.

Influenced heavily by the High Anglican Gothic, the Holy Trinity church is of cruciform plan, structural members in compression leading to a tall, buttressed form with interior columns of load-bearing masonry and tall windows, all with an emphasis on the vertical. The furniture is also designed in the Gothic style and there is an organ that is still in use. Dappled light enters through the stained-glass windows. Brass and marble plaques in the church record the names of the soldiers and officers who died in station or while on service. Many of those thus commemorated are interred in the adjoining cemetery. Amongst those buried there is Colonel Davidson, the resident in Hyderabad during 1857.

There were four schools in Bolarum, one each for European boys and girls, an SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts) Mission School for the Indian children and a Roman Catholic school for the poor. In his memoirs Sir Richard Temple records his visit to all of them on 11 June 1867, 'I visited the European school at Bolarum and thought it pretty good. The native school was not so good. I also visited the Poor House and saw the destitute creatures being supplied with food.'⁴⁰

There were originally three bazaars in the station, the main Suddar or Doveton bazaar and two smaller ones, the Cavalry or Risala Bazaar and the Pioneer Bazaar. The Cavalry and Pioneer bazaars were later clubbed and were collectively known as the Chhota or Small Bazaar. An interesting aspect adopted clearly from Hyderabad city and based on an agreement with the nizam, was that no



RIGHT: The Holy Trinity Church, the most prominent church in Bolarum, was constructed in 1846

ABOVE: The altar with the original stained-glass windows. The church was designed in the neo-Gothic style with an emphasis on the vertical





liquor shops were permitted within 1,000 yards of the cantonment boundary.⁴¹

The officers' mess of the Hyderabad Contingent was the centre for recreation, and it continues to be the mess of the EME even today. There are several references to the ballroom at the mess, the string band that played there during balls, luncheons and banquets hosted by the resident for the nizam and to the 'renowned hospitality of its hosts'.⁴² A report on Bolarum published in *Hyderabad Affairs* notes that the 'place is historical as being the only officers' mess in Southern India which has entertained British and Foreign Royalty'.⁴³ There is also a detailed description of the visit of the viceroy and vicerine, Lord and Lady Ripon, to the mess in 1884:

'At 8 o' clock that evening, the Resident entertained His Highness to a return banquet held in the noble ball-room of the Hyderabad Contingent Mess house at Bolarum. Covers were laid for one hundred

which included various nobles of Hyderabad State.' The following evening, 'the Viceroy honoured the Hyderabad Contingent with his presence at a ball given in their mess-house. The Nizam and nine Nobles of the Hyderabad State also attended. A large and brilliant assembly gathered together and thoroughly enjoyed an entertainment to the success of which the elegant room itself and the excellent string band of the Contingent contributed in no small measure'.⁴⁴

The cantonment grew and a new wave of building activity was witnessed between 1874 and 1878, when Bolarum became the headquarters of the Hyderabad Contingent. The houses and barracks built during this second phase were sturdy, sometimes two-storeyed structures, their stone-faced façades emphasising their permanence. Most of these still stand, among them the Retreat, a bungalow occupied by Sir Winston Churchill when he visited the cantonment for polo matches in 1896.



ABOVE & LEFT: The dining hall at the officers' mess, Bolarum in the early 20th century c. 1900, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection], and the dining hall at the officers' mess, Bolarum as it is today

FAR LEFT: The ballroom at the officers' mess, Bolarum

The increase in military activity at Bolarum after 1876 led to a growing demand for land. Records available at the National and Telangana State Archives confirm that apart from the *sarf-e-khas* (royal) lands, *jagirs* of the aristocracy in the neighbouring Yaprul, Alwal and Hakimpet, as well as villages occupied by civilians, either cultivated or uncultivated, were obtained for this purpose. The procedure for acquisition was via the Resident, who would issue the request to the nizam's government. If there were no objections, the land in question was placed at the disposal of the military authorities⁴⁵ and compensation was paid by the nizam's government. Often, the land was occupied prior to receiving permission, as in the case of the 100-acre Rifle Range taken over in 1886.⁴⁶ Land acquisition continued long after the merger with Secunderabad, including for an additional runway required by the Royal Air Force at Hakimpet in 1943.⁴⁷

When the cantonment was merged with Secunderabad in 1904, the Bolarum Committee that acted as the civil magistrate was abolished, the funds of the two cantonments were unified, and the public works of Bolarum were handed over to the Cantonment Engineer at Secunderabad.⁴⁸ Bolarum, however, always retained a separate identity as a quintessentially small military station that was a syncretic combination of British discipline and Asaf Jahi grandeur, a reflection of the contingent that it held. The contingent's successor regiments, among them the IX Deccan Horse with its illustrious list of battle honours, still value their historic association with the cantonment.

By looking back, as we have done, it is possible to better understand the context and importance of the Residency House, later to become the President of India's home in southern India, and the subject of our next chapter.

Notes

1. Raza Ali Khan, *Hyderabad 400 Years (1591–1991)*(Hyderabad:Zenith, 1990), 193.
2. Omar Khalidi, *The British Residency in Hyderabad: An Outpost of the Raj (1779–1948)*(London:BACSA,2005), 4.
3. Ibid.17.
4. C.U.Atchison (compiled) by the treaties of 1792, 1799, 1802 in *A collection of treaties, engagements and sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries* (Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1909).
5. British and European officials in the Hyderabad Contingent and later in the nizam's administration were extremely well paid.The catch phrase at the time was 'Nizzy pays for all' in Edward Thomson, G.T.Garratt, *History of British Rule in India*, vol. I (New Delhi:Atlantic, 1999), 282.
6. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal*, entry on Saturday 16 June 1867 (London:W.H.Allen, 1887), 147.
7. In 1917, when the seventh nizam was honoured with the GBE (Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire), he mockingly said, the GBE stood for 'Gave Berar to the British'.The British had leased Berar from the nizam in perpetuity and from 1902 onwards and despite unsuccessful attempts from successive nizams did not part with this fertile territory till the end.
8. R.G.Burton, *A History of the Hyderabad Contingent* (Calcutta:Central Printing Press, Government of India, 1905),104.
9. Resolution dated 28 November 1853, from C.U. Atchison (compiled), *A collection of treatises...*
10. Ibid., Article 2 of the Treaty of 21 May 1853.
11. Eugene Dattel, 'Cotton and the Civil War', in *Mississippi History Now*, June 2008.
12. ManzoorAlam Shah, *Hyderabad–Secunderabad—A study in urban geography* (New Delhi :Allied Publishers, 1965), 7.
13. This was part of the Subsidiary Alliance Treaty of 1798, from C.U. Atchison, *A collection of treatises...*
14. William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*(New Delhi:Penguin), 287.
15. Taylor Meadows, *The Confessions of a Thug* (London: Regan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1839),123.
16. Claude A.Campbell, *Glimpses of the Nizam's Dominions* (Philadelphia:C.B. Burrows,1898), 253.
17. M.V.Naidu (ed.), *City of Secunderabad (Deccan)*, Secunderabad Municipal Corporation, 1955, 2.
18. Ibid., 4.
19. Ibid., 3.
20. Moulvie Syed Mahdi Ali, *Hyderabad Affairs*, vol. I (London: Talbot, 1883), 852.
21. Campbell, *Glimpses of...*, 254.
22. Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali, *Hyderabad Affairs...*, 846.
23. Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad...*, 145.
24. In his letter dated 25 May 1864, addressed to Salar Jung, Captain Yule stated the necessity for a separate civil court. A year later, a Small Cause Court was established in Secunderabad and Captain Jones was appointed as a judge with power to decide money claims not extending Rs 1000.Telangana State Archives, File no. 13/1/164 and an article in *The Englishman* dated 5 December 1862 quoted in M.V.Naidu (ed.), *City of Secunderabad ...*, 5.
25. Extract from a letter from Major Price, Secretary to the Resident at Hyderabad, to Secretary of PWD, Government of India, No. 114, 6 September 1867, in Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali, *Hyderabad Affairs*, vol. IV, 245.
26. Ibid., 245.
27. Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series, Hyderabad State, Government Printing House, Calcutta, 1909, 254.
28. Minutes recorded by Sir G.U.Yule on the subject of the Rail Tramway to connect the City of Hyderabad and Cantts of Secunderabad and Bolarum, with the Madras and Bombay Railways, 18 March 1867. National Archives, New Delhi, Hyderabad Residency Papers, Political Branch, File No. 16 of 1888.
29. It was a detailed proposal and the duration of the trams was every half an hour from the terminus.The proposal when sent to the nizam's government received no objection, but was shelved on complications relating to varying laws and authority in the jurisdiction of British and Nizam territory. Letter from James E. Berkley, Locomotive and Carriage Superintendent, Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway to the resident of Hyderabad, dated 3 December 1887. National Archives, New Delhi, Hyderabad Residency Papers, Political Branch, File no. 16 of 1888.
30. Letter addressed to the Secretary to the Resident at Hyderabad from the Brig., Commanding Officer at Secunderabad dated 29January 1945.National Archives, New Delhi, Hyderabad Residency Papers, File no.183, 1945.
31. Administrative powers of civilian areas of Secunderabad of 3.6 sq miles were restored to the nizam's government from 1 December 1945. While negotiations for the retrocession had begun in the late 19th century, the plans came to fruition as tangible recognition of the state's war effort. A municipal committee was formed in 1946 and in 1951 Secunderabad was given the status of a corporation and remained so until 1974 when it was merged with the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad. National Archives, New Delhi, Rendition-Secunderabad Agreement from the Hyderabad Residency Papers, Accounts branch, Hyderabad, File no. 59 (21), 1946, File 183, 1945.
32. The Secunderabad Town Improvement Trust was set up by Resident Sir

- Terrence Keyes (1930–33), who chose to replicate successful models of low-income housing adopted by Hyderabad over the recommendations of the Cantonment Engineers. After Rendition, the incomplete projects were handed over to the Hyderabad government for completion. National Archives, New Delhi, Secunderabad Town Improvement Scheme from the Hyderabad Residency papers, Political Branch, File no. 75, 1929.
33. Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series, Hyderabad State, Government Printing House, Calcutta, 1909, 119.
 34. Central Records Office, Hyderabad Government, Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, 1720–1890, The Central Records Office, Hyderabad, 1954, 73.
 35. Application of Messrs Crompton & Co. Ltd. & the Brush Electrical Engineering Co. Ltd. for a license for the supply of electrical energy to the Hyderabad Residency Bazaars and the Cantonment areas of Secunderabad, Bolarum and Trimulgherry. National Archives, New Delhi, Foreign Department (Internal) Files 61–74 dated July 1907.
 36. Lt. Gen. J.S. Fraser (compiled), 'Report on the Medical Topography and Statistics of the Nizam's Military Cantonments and Army', Christian Knowledge Society, Madras, 1852, 1.
 37. Campbell, *Glimpses of...*, 260.
 38. Ibid., 257.
 39. Telangana State Archives, File No. 13/1/926.
 40. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad...*, entry on 11 June 1867, 144.
 41. Telegram from Captain H.S. Briggs, Executive Engineer, Secunderabad Division, Military Works to the Assistant Superintendent-in-Charge, no. 10 Party, Survey of India dated 6 December 1894.
 42. Temple makes several references to the Mess in his diary and the Viceroy Lord Ripon who was entertained there during his visit to Hyderabad in 1884.
 43. Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali, op.cit., 855.
 44. National Archives, New Delhi, Foreign Department, Secret Files, Investiture of the Nizam of Hyderabad from April 1884, Nos. 4–22.
 45. Ibid., Hyderabad Residency Files, Political Branch, File No. 776, 1934.
 46. Letter from the Resident at Bolarum dated 16 July 1886 asking for land belonging to H.H. to be given over for a rifle range. Telangana State Archives, File No. 13/1/178.
 47. Acquisition of 111 acres of *Sarf-e-Khas* Land in Bolarum in the Secunderabad cantonment for military purposes in 1926 (National Archives, New Delhi, Foreign Department (Internal) File no. 271 dated July 1926). In 1934, 163.09 acres of land at Yaprul belonging to Raja Binayak Raj Bahadur was taken as a cavalry training area (National Archives, New Delhi, the Hyderabad Residency Papers, Political Branch, File no. 416, 1934). In 1934, 295.79 acres was taken for the cavalry of the Haig Lines. This land was completely outside the boundaries of the cantonment and comprised both *Sarf-e-Khas* and *jagir* lands of Raja Narayan Pershad (Telangana State Archives, File no. 37/1/8). Acquisition of a plot of land measuring 30 acres to the west of Doveton Bazaar with the Secunderabad Cantonment required in connection with the improvement of a portion of Bolarum Bazaar. By then requests from the resident were directed to the nizam's Executive Council (National Archives, New Delhi, Hyderabad Residency Papers, Judicial Department. File no. 291 dated July 1944). The *jagir* belonged to Raja Purushottam Pershad and in 1944, the Town Improvement Trust offered to pay any reasonable acquisition cost. Telangana State Archives File no. 13/1/355.
 48. National Archives, New Delhi, arrangements for the amalgamation of the cantonments of Bolarum and Secunderabad: Foreign (Internal), April 1906, Files 5–12.



The tombstone of Colonel Cuthbert Davidson, the Resident at Hyderabad from 1857–1862. He died in Bolarum and is buried in the cemetery of the Holy Trinity Church



CHAPTER VI

OF PRESIDENTS, RESIDENTS AND THEIR RESIDENCES

THE STORY OF THE RASHTRAPATI NILAYAM

Anuradha Naik

The President of India's southern retreat, the Rashtrapati Nilayam, is located at Bolarum, a leafy suburb to the north-east of Hyderabad's twin city Secunderabad, and 18 kilometres from the Charminar, the historic epicentre of Hyderabad. The Nilayam (Sanskrit for abode) is at first glance a typical 19th-century colonial bungalow surrounded by 97 acres of sprawling lawns, beautifully laid out gardens and fruit orchards set in the picturesque Deccani landscape.

This chapter traces the story of the Rashtrapati Nilayam or the Residency House Bolarum as it was formerly known. It brings to light for the first time the historical importance of this unpretentious but powerful home of the British Resident to the nizam's court and the everyday workings and events that shaped one of the most influential buildings in the erstwhile Hyderabad state.

However, it is essential first to understand its role as one of two homes of the British Resident. Just as the viceroy in Shimla had his palace and his retreat at Mashobra, so too did the representative of the East India Company and latterly the British Crown in Hyderabad have both a grand and a rural home. While the viceroy used his retreat as a place to escape the 'tyranny of dispatch boxes', the resident came to Bolarum as the administrator of the Nizam's, later the Hyderabad Contingent, and British Subsidiary Force stationed at Secunderabad from 1798.¹

*The Rashtrapati Nilayam, formerly the Residency House
Bolarum. C. 1880, Raja Deen Dayal & Sons, Secunderabad
[Source: Private collection, author]*



ABOVE: The principal staircase of the Residency. The design drew from large manor houses popular in 18th century England

FACING PAGE LEFT: The entrance to the majestic Residency at Chaderghat, Hyderabad. C. 1890, Raja Deen Dayal & Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily, Hyderabad]

FACING PAGE RIGHT: The western elevation of the Residency, the first European style building in Hyderabad. C. 1900, Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Hugh A. Rayner Photograph Collection]



THE RESIDENT AND HIS RESIDENCES

When John Holland, the civil servant who became the first resident, came to Hyderabad in April 1779, he stayed in 'a house in the Hindustani style and a garden on the banks of the River Musi'.² The seventh Resident, James Achilles Kirkpatrick, found these quarters perfectly uninhabitable³ and it was then, in 1800, that a plan for constructing a new Residency was proposed. Completed in 1806, the Residency was constructed on a 63-acre site north of the River Musi.⁴ It was designed in the Palladian style and also drew references from the recently constructed Government House in Kolkata.

The first building to be constructed in Hyderabad in the European style, the Residency's location and scale leave little doubt that it was a forceful political statement in codified urban form. Facing north and away from the walled city of Hyderabad, the approach to its main portico up a broad staircase with large marble lions on either side, the coat of arms of the Company within the tympan of the pediment, the statuary along the top parapets and massive Corinthian columns supporting the portico, 'intended of course as an ornament, but quite out of proportion to the building',⁵ were no design oversight. That it was successful in what it set out to achieve is evident in the aura that the

building gained in writings of the 19th century. As one writer put it, 'The interior contains a grand suite of state apartments on the upper storey, which, though decorated in too gaudy a style to satisfy European taste, are admirably adapted to please the natives, who delight in showy decoration and glowing colours.'⁶ A tourist guide note, highlighting places of interest in Hyderabad, mentions, 'The chandeliers cost a prodigious sum, and the lighting of the Residency in former times for a single reception night entailed an expense of £1000. On such occasions the crowd was so great and the number of those who tried to force an entrance so excessive that swords were often drawn and it is said that blood was shed.'⁷

Grand as the Hyderabad Residency was, its upkeep was equally expensive. Embarrassed at having to submit enormous bills to the nizam, Resident Josiah Stewart (1830–38) in 1833 proposed the construction of a new, 'less pretentious' Residency. The other reasons he cited for the move was that the Hyderabad Residency's 'proximity to the City afforded facilities for intriguers and corrupt servants and exposed it to danger from the lawless soldiery of the City'. He further considered it undesirable that the Resident should live so near His Highness' court that constant 'references' were possible between the two.⁸



Bolarum was an idyllic location for the new building. Away from the court and the dusty and congested bazaar, it was protected by the Secunderabad cantonment to the south and the Bolarum cantonment to the north. In the three decades leading up to the construction of the Residency House there had also been a distinct change in the relative positions of the nizam and the British. The confident British no longer needed to strengthen their position in Hyderabad and the resident's permanent presence was not required in the city.

Although both were the official homes of the same person and had been constructed by the Nizam's government, the Bolarum and Hyderabad residencies were diametrically opposite not only in their architectural vocabulary and scale, but also in their political and social symbolism.

At Bolarum, neither the nizam nor the British needed to negotiate for power or engage in the politics of identity. Nor did they have an audience to fuel grand gestures of supremacy and one-upmanship. In fact, it was fascinating to discover during the research for this volume, that despite the tensions that existed between the British and the nizam all through the 19th century, at Bolarum the resident and the ruler lived side by side as neighbours. This was in sharp contrast to the competition for architectural supremacy that was witnessed on the urban chessboard of Hyderabad.

A BALANCED QUARTET

Only four of the major houses at Bolarum were not occupied by serving military officers of the contingent. Aligned with and neighbouring one another, the largest and most prominent of this quartet was the Residency House, described in detail later. Close by, the Asafia Kothi was the country house of the nizam himself, and another belonged to his diwan or minister, and was referred to as the Salar Jung Residence.⁹ The fourth, known as the Abbey, was the house of the First Assistant to the resident. All but the Salar Jung Residence were maintained by the nizam's Public Works Department.¹⁰

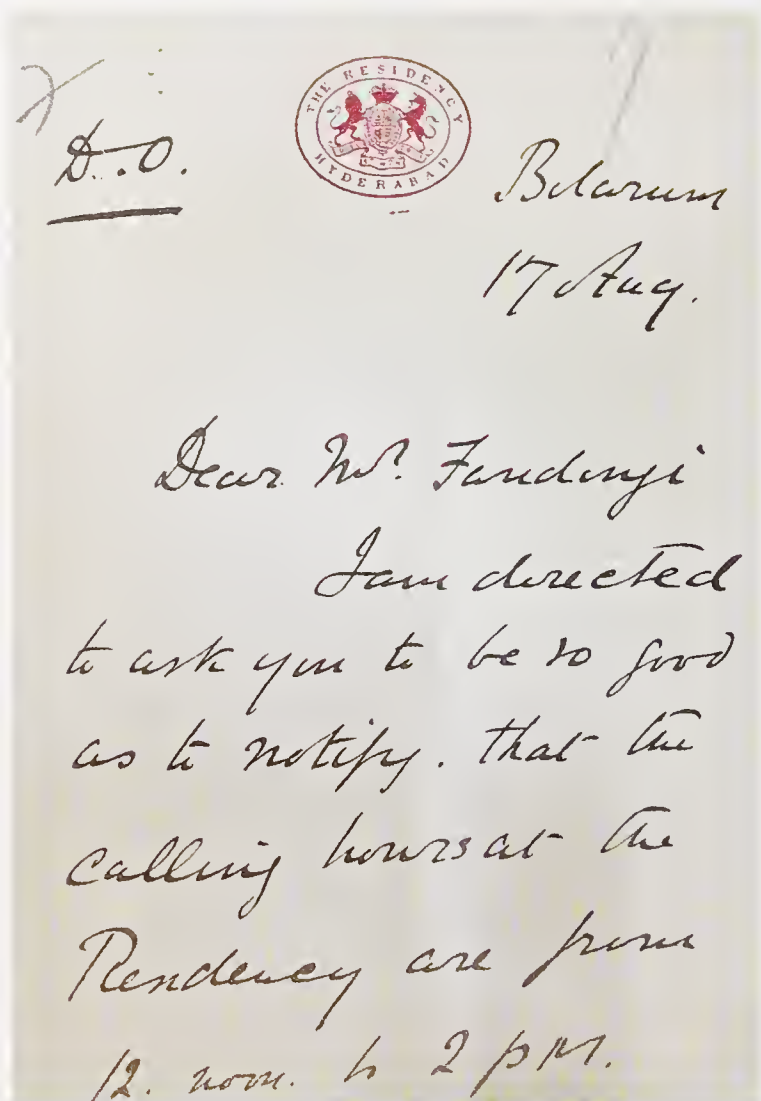
The durbar hall of the Residency today. The papier mache ceiling in intricate geometric patterns, the chandeliers and the large mirrors originally from the Brighton pavilion still remain

These four buildings were some of the oldest structures in the cantonment. While it is difficult to ascribe a date to each of them, it's known that they existed in 1852.¹¹ As the Residency House was built after the 1833 proposal, it's likely that the others would have been constructed around the same time.

North-west of the Residency House, its grounds turned to jungle, the Asafia Kothi is an understated single-storey building, designed in the vernacular style, with rooms arranged around a central courtyard. A tile-roofed verandah runs along the courtyard that is shaded with mango trees and has a fountain. Here, the contrasting architectural statements of the Asafia Kothi and colonial-style Residency were juxtaposed harmoniously. A private road also linked the Residency to the Asafia Kothi.

The Kothi, constructed during the reign of Nasir-ud-Daula, the fourth nizam¹² (1829–57), was a preferred retreat of his son Afzal-ud-Daula, the fifth nizam (1857–69).¹³ It is unlikely that the sixth or seventh nizam's used it very much. The Kothi is also referred to as the Bolarum House and Bolarum Guest House in official communications from 1896 onwards.¹⁴ For the duration of the Second World War, it was leased without charge to the British army.¹⁵ From December 1947 to July 1948, the Kothi served as a school for the Heir Apparent Prince Bereket Ali Khan Mukarram Jah and his younger brother, Prince Karamat Ali Khan Muffakham Jah.¹⁶ In 1967, it was handed over to the Indian Air Force and served as an officers' mess till 1975. It is currently leased to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and functions as the Rajaji Institute of Public Affairs and Administration.

North of the Asafia Kothi and adjoining it, the Abbey is a single-storey colonial bungalow, smaller in scale than the Residency House and virtually unaltered since the time it was built. Typically raised on a plinth, it has a large central sitting room with smaller rooms to the periphery. The kitchen is separate from the main building and is connected to it via a covered walkway. The bungalow has crenellated parapets with faux turrets and gateposts



TOP: The Abbey, the house of the first assistant resident and one of the four principal buildings at Bolarum. It remains virtually unaltered

FACING PAGE: The Asafia Kotli, the nizam's house in Bolarum designed in the vernacular style. It has been altered over the past century and is today the Rajaji Institute for Public Affairs and Administration

ABOVE: The Residency House at Bolarum was popular amongst the residents, who used it as a retreat. Sir Alexander Pinhey, resident for 1911–14, wrote to Sir Faridoon Jung informing him of visiting hours at Bolarum in August 1912 [Source: The Telangana State Archives]

ornamented in stucco, which seem to have been added later.¹⁷ Once the Padumone Engineers' Mess of the Indian army, it is currently in a sad state of disuse.

The last house of this original ensemble was the diwan's. While it has not been possible to identify it, there are references to it from as early as 1851 during the period when Salar Jung's uncle, Siraj-ul-Mulk, was diwan.¹⁸ 'Hyderabad Affairs', a report in nine volumes published by the nizam's government in 1890, mentions that 'close to the Resident's villa is a fine house belonging to Sir Salar Jung, with beautiful grounds. Panthers come to these grounds constantly.'¹⁹ There is also evidence to prove that Mir Laik Ali Khan Salar Jung II (1884–87) used this house.²⁰ The last record of it is in a letter dated 11 December 1895 when Afsar Jung, commander of the nizam's army, wrote to Mr Fardoonji, assistant minister, requesting permission for 18 troopers to camp in its compound while they underwent a three-week course in equestrian training with the 21st Hussars.²¹

A RIVAL FOR THE RESIDENTS' AFFECTIONS

For more than a hundred years after its completion the Bolarum Residency, with its influential neighbours, remained an alternative centre of British power in Hyderabad. In fact many residents preferred living at Bolarum, 'which was reputed to be more healthy'.²² Sir Richard Temple (1863–68) often stayed here receiving guests, entertaining, inspecting troops at Bolarum and Secunderabad, riding out to villages and sites of interest in the vicinity and writing reports.²³ Letters from Residents Pinhey, Fraser and Barr in the first two decades of the 20th century also indicate their preference and that of their families for Bolarum.²⁴



For them, the Residency House was something of a home away from home. Its architecture was simple, the surroundings peaceful and the scale personal. In the early 20th century it was seen as a 'villa, which has been a practice for him (the resident) to occupy during the hotter months'.²⁵

In contrast, by the late 1860s the monumental Hyderabad Residency had been reduced to a 'sort of rest-house or cloak room' on the resident's way to the city from Bolarum.^{26 27} It, however, continued to be the ceremonial centre of British power in the nizam's state.²⁸ Proposals for permanently moving away from it began only towards the end of the 19th century. By this time, the boundaries between Hyderabad and Secunderabad had blurred as the cities expanded along the railway routes that connected them.²⁹

Undeterred by the rejection of earlier proposals,³⁰ in 1921 Resident, Sir Charles Russell (1919–25), made one of his own, arguing that 'a motor car covers the distance from Bolarum to the Palace in not more than half an hour which means that it is as accessible as the present day building [the Hyderabad Residency] was in the old days. I have not in fact found when living at Bolarum that Indians were less ready to accept invitations'.³¹

Russell's idea was to return the Hyderabad Residency to the nizam and shift altogether to Bolarum. He did however suggest constructing a new building there because, 'the present house at Bolarum would be unsuitable for the purpose by reason of its relative insignificance, of there being no accommodation for the Resident's Staff, offices, etc., and of the proximity of other dwellings. It would be



TOP: The Residency House, now the Rashtrapati Nilayam in its resplendent grounds today

ABOVE: The main entrance to the building is from an unassuming porch on the east

essential that the new Residency should be on the scale not less than that of the present building to which the public of Hyderabad has been accustomed for nearly a century and a quarter.³²

The political secretary at Delhi, J.B. Wood, in response noted, 'I do not like the proposal of Mr Russell's for many reasons. I suspect that it is put forward not so much on military grounds—though the position of the Hyderabad Residency is admittedly weak from a defensive point of view—as on grounds of comfort and convenience for the resident, whose hobby is sanitation and hygiene.

The refusal Wood sent Russell was blunt.

Dear Russell

I have shown your . . . demi-official letter of the 14th March to His Excellency. On political and sentimental grounds to which he attaches very great weight, His Excellency is averse from the surrender of the old Hyderabad Residency and is not prepared to agree to the question being raised in the manner indicated in your letter.³³

Despite the oscillating popularity of the residencies, both remained in British possession and were transferred to the nizam's government only in 1947. While the fabric of the Hyderabad Residency was consistently treated with restraint and even reverence, numerous alterations were made at Bolarum at the instance of the residents. They did not, however, change the basic form of the bungalow, which remained typically British colonial even though ancillary buildings developed in a Deccani style. Both these aspects are highlighted below.

THE RESIDENCY HOUSE, BOLARUM

The bungalow style best suited the requirements of the resident at Bolarum.³⁴ In his illustrated guide to *Bungalows and Country Houses*, R.A. Briggs describes a bungalow as 'essentially a little nook or retreat . . . a little country house—a homely, cosy little place, with verandahs and balconies

and the plan so arranged so as to ensure complete comfort, with a feeling of rusticity and ease'.³⁵

The Residency House is characteristically set in a large walled compound, covering an area of 97 acres.³⁶ Only three of the original eight entrances to the compound now remain.³⁷ The principal entrance is from the south-west, through a large gate with imposing ornamental gateposts. An impressive driveway lined with lofty trees leads past landscaped gardens, wrapping around the house to the porch and main entrance to the east.

The single-storey house, with a central block flanked by two side wings, is itself raised on a low plinth, with a stark whitewashed exterior. Although colonial in appearance, the building was constructed using local materials and labour provided by the nizam's government. It is a brick masonry and lime load-bearing structure with a predominantly two-level flat Madras-terraced roof consisting of brick-on-edge masonry in lime mortar over closely spaced timber joints. The timber used was teak and where repaired after the advent of the railways in Hyderabad in 1874, was largely replaced by steel.

The structure consists of thick insulating walls plastered with breathable lime and high ceilings with ventilators to draw out the rising warm air. Verandahs of a lower height ribbon the building on all sides, following its form and preventing direct sunlight from entering the rooms. To further keep the harsh summer sun away, cane chiks are used, and through these traditional responses to the climate the physical fabric of the building remains rooted in local architectural traditions. A twinned Tuscan-style colonnade holds up the verandah. The Tuscan Order, the simplest of the five Classical Orders in architecture, was used in utilitarian and military buildings.³⁸ Built by Hyderabadi craftsmen, who probably had little idea of this style of architecture, these columns were not constructed in accordance with the rigid proportions of the original Tuscan Order but merely gave an appearance of it.³⁹

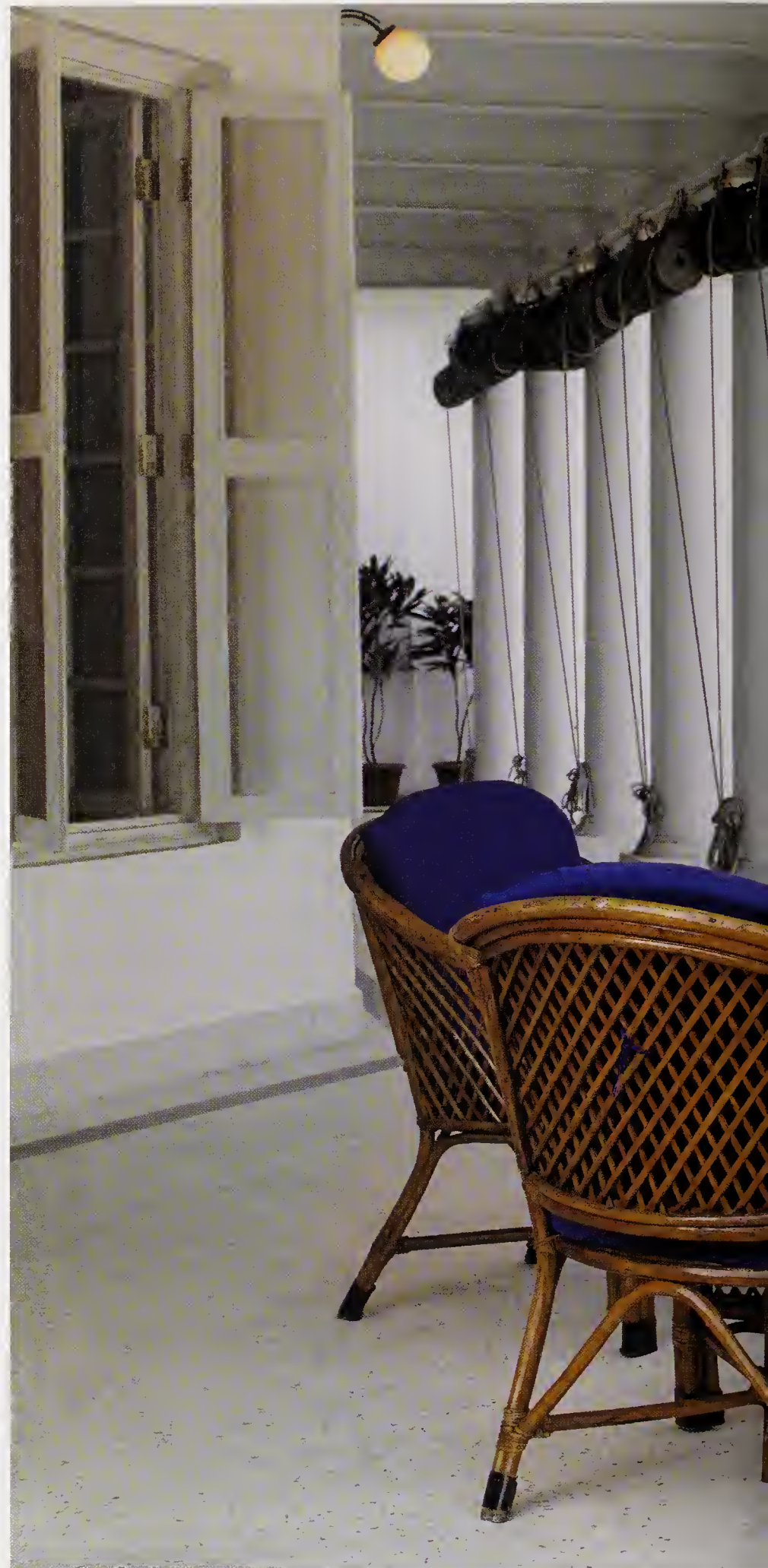
The entrance to the Residency House is from the central

block's understated porch that leads to a hallway. The plan is symmetrical, with rooms on either side of the hallway, which continues to become the colonnades that lead to the two side wings. These curved colonnades could be considered reminiscent of the grand designs of 18th-century English country houses like Blenheim Palace and Kedleston Hall. However, the scale, the proportions and the arrangements of the interior of the 2,500-square-metre Residency House are much more in keeping with the colonial bungalow.

The original layout of the building and organisation of rooms becomes clear from the details given in a quotation from F&C Osler in 1914 for the electrification of the Residency House. Entering from the porch into the hallway there was a suite of rooms on either side, followed by the south-facing drawing room and study, and the north-facing dining room and billiards room. This aspect of planning followed in temperate England to maximise the use of light, was advocated by Briggs in his guide to bungalows, where he states that the 'Dining Room should be arranged so that the morning sun can enter and the Drawing Room should receive the afternoon light'.⁴⁰ Interestingly, this was followed in the tropical climes of Bolarum too, despite the use of verandahs to keep out the sun, perhaps out of nostalgia or to recreate a sense of comfort and familiarity. Beyond this central core were another two suites of rooms organised on either side of the central hallway and leading on to the curved colonnade to the west.

The ballroom with its sprung teak floor was the largest room in this wing with a suite of bedrooms on its western extremity. Today, this western wing constitutes the President of India's private apartments. Interestingly, the eastern wing, used nowadays by the president's staff, was originally the Resident's private suite.

The arrangement of rooms with the central living spaces and suites to the periphery symmetrically organised along a central spine is distinctive of the British colonial style of architecture, indicating that although the building was built and supervised by local masons and contractors, it



Rooms open out into the verandah, the buffer zone between the inside and the outside





ABOVE: The eastern wing, today used by the president's staff

RIGHT: The private apartments of the President of India, formerly the ballroom of the Residency House

FACING PAGE: The president in his study





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Bolarum Residency's upholstery
furniture

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Manager

TOP LEFT: The Mappin & Webb Princes set that was imported from London in July 1905 for use at the Residency House, Bolarum. The company sent an illustration of the set as confirmation of the order that had been modified [Source: The Telangana State Archives]

TOP RIGHT: A bill dated 14 October 1916 from F&C Osler Ltd, Bombay, for converting the candle-lit chandeliers at the Residency House, Bolarum to electric ones. It cost Rs 600 to convert four chandeliers [Source: The Telangana State Archives]

BOTTOM: An acknowledgment receipt from Wrenn, Bennett & Co., Secunderabad, dated 24 November 1912 for Rs 422 and 14 annas towards upholstery purchased for the Residency House, Bolarum [Source: The Telangana State Archives]

was probably designed by a British engineer.⁴¹

Another element of colonial design was the separation of the kitchen from the main house. Usually a covered walkway linked the kitchen and dining room, as at the Abbey. Here at the Residency House the two are connected by a vaulted tunnel with submarine-like skylights, creating a fantastic and quirky route for a wholly domestic purpose. The reason for the tunnel could be that the approach to the building was via the north front, where carriages, and later cars, would drive past to arrive at the main porch. In addition, the public rooms were organised facing north, and the sight of butlers carrying food to the dining room would have been unappealing in a hierarchical world of ‘upstairs-downstairs’.⁴²

THE INTERIORS

The simplicity of the Bolarum bungalow’s exterior was made up for by the grandeur of its interiors. Remarkably, lying unseen for a century or more, records still survive that make it possible to reconstruct a detailed picture of how the Residency House would have looked, and of the demands placed on the nizams by the residents, or rather by their wives. While their husbands handled official work, the women looked after the home, making requests directly to the nizam’s political secretary and assistant minister who passed on instructions to the state’s Public Works Department. A liberal annual maintenance budget⁴³ covered most costs.

Considerable changes to the Residency House were made during the tenures of Sir Alexander Pinhey (1911–14 & 1914–16) and Sir Stuart Fraser (1914 & 1916–21). On 10 July 1916, in advance of her family’s arrival in Hyderabad, Fraser’s wife, Lady Constance, wrote to request a new Steinway piano, and ask for a wall to be knocked down to enlarge her daughter’s sitting room.⁴⁴ Her daughter Violet also made her own demand. In a letter written to Sir Faridoon Jung, she wrote, ‘. . . I wonder as they are altering it, if it were possible to throw out a small bow (bay) window looking down the lawn . . . It would make the room lighter and prettier and I shall be very glad as

we are to have a new piano at the Residency as I am fond of music.’⁴⁵

On 10 July, Sir Faridoon Jung sent a telegram to Violet: ‘We have managed to put in bow window to room and hope work will be completed by time you arrive. Stop. Piano installed and is pronounced a beauty.’⁴⁶

The residents’ wives aspired to standards nothing short of the nizam’s. In a letter to Sir Faridoon Jung, following the electrification of the Residency and the replacement of lamps, Lady Pinhey wrote, ‘. . . the present lighting are those old chandeliers, very fine in themselves but, not having candles now in their empty brackets, look very ugly. I want them made with lamps like H.H. has at King Kothi’.⁴⁷

The chandeliers and lamps at the Residency House were purchased from the fashionable manufacturer, F&C Osler. Established in Birmingham in 1807, they specialised in brilliantly cut glass, and gained international recognition after the installation of a giant crystal fountain at the Great Exhibition of London in 1851. They found loyal and generous clients amongst the Indian princes and by the second half of the 19th century had showrooms in Birmingham, London and Kolkata.

At the Residency House, 11 chandeliers were purchased from their Kolkata showroom. Wall-lights for the dining room and drawing room were ordered from their catalogue of 1905. These were then altered to suit the requirements at the Residency. The wife of the resident Sir Charles Bayley (1905–1908) ordered eight wall brackets but clearly stated to the nizam’s assistant minister, ‘As the above are required for the dining room please only partly frost the globes, so they give a very bright and clear light’. She ordered faint pink globes for the drawing room.

When Osler undertook the task of installing the electrical connection to the Residency House in October 1914 for a cost of Rs 5,121, they altered existing candle and kerosene fittings to electric ones and provided electric fans in the rooms.⁴⁸ These were clearly changing times and as the Residency House ushered in the modern era, a



An Art Deco style chandelier with the Greek meander pattern etched in glass. The chandelier is listed in the 1904 Osler catalogue and is today hung in the president's private drawing room

file note from the *darogah* (head butler), Abdool Rehman, states that 18 *punkah* poles were sent to the stores.⁴⁹

Prior to the introduction of electricity, *punkah-wallahs* would have operated the traditional cloth *punkah* fans by a pulley system unseen by those indoors. Traditional *punkahs* were fixed to the ceilings and at the Residency House, rosettes were created on the steleonite ceiling from where the *punkahs* hung. Steleonite, richly embossed pressed steel panels painted with enamel, were used as decorative false ceilings in the drawing rooms, ballroom, dining room and passageways.⁵⁰

Wallpaper was imported from England or purchased at Mumbai or Kolkata, since it was not available in Hyderabad.⁵¹ In 1913, the nizam's political secretary received a bill of £6-18-6 from Hampton and Sons, London, on account of wallpaper samples supplied to the Bolarum Residency. Lady Constance Fraser also wrote to Sir Faridoon Jung in June 1916, '... what about wall papers for the boudoir? If you have some suitable ones in stock, could we not wire or write to Calcutta to Lazarus & Co. to send at once some of their best samples for a self colour or stripes for a drawing room, especially in white-grey or pink, plain self colour or stripe with perhaps a small frieze for the top?'⁵² The use of colour, although perhaps in muted pastel shades, for ceilings, walls and floor was to add warmth and to soften the white, stark and simple straight lines of the exterior.

The floor was polished teak in the drawing, dining and ballrooms, and Shahbad, a local soft limestone, in the private rooms. Floor coverings ranged from bamboo matting in passageways to cotton durries and silk carpets from Gulbarga jail, Warangal and Agra, and woollen and Brussels carpets imported from England.⁵³

The furniture was eclectic too, ranging from light woven-cane and canvas-backed easy chairs to heavy ebonised pieces from England. A record of furniture received at the Residency House from Kolkata in October 1900 includes '3 sofas, teakwood long arm and easy chairs, 6 drawing

room chairs, 4 teapoys, 1 shield back cabinet, an ebonised double top table, a teak frame canvas panel almirah, teakwood almirahs, teak and rose wood dressing tables with glass, a Majolica vase and 3 glass vases.'⁵⁴

A list of items available with the *darogah* in January 1915 comprised an equally varied mix of items, 'Office chairs, easy chairs, 18 bentwood chairs, wicker chairs, teakwood arm chairs with cane seat, oval table with marble slab, writing table with drawers, wall tables (consoles) carved with marble slab, large photo frames and mirrors, bronze figures, teakwood music stands ...'⁵⁵

Sofas and chairs were upholstered using curled English horsehair and cushions were plumped with purified white small feathers. While linen, cretonne, cotton and muslin in a variety of colours and patterns was available locally, silk, upholstery-leather, Genoa velvet, broadcloth and chenille were imported from England. The palette varied from deep blues and olives, bright reds and yellows, whites and pinks, to muted roses and browns in plain, striped and chintz motifs. Silk and gold fringes, brass and leather buttons and silk and cotton cords, made to order, added the final flourishes. Curtains for doors and windows ranged from heavy tapestry to floral white muslins, plain pink, red-chintz and green striped cretonne.⁵⁶ These were undoubtedly expensive items and one consignment sent from Kolkata in November 1912 was so valuable it required a police guard. A receipt reads: 'Railway for 4 policemen to Hyderabad and back carriage: Sixty-two rupees and eight annas'.^{57 58}

A lifestyle typical of the Raj elite, with fine wines, after-dinner cigars and a diet of cakes, puddings and homemade butter, jam and pies, is very clear by the beginning of the 20th century. In July 1905, Messrs Mappin & Webb of London sent out cutlery, tea and coffee services, kettles with stands, biscuit boxes, butter dishes, toast racks, egg stands, sauce boats, entrée dishes, meat dishes pierced and chased, champagne holders and cigar lighters. A list of items ordered by Mrs Bayley in August 1907 includes:



The table set at the stately dining room at the Rashtrapati Nilayam today

‘six chota hazri sets, a dozen white afternoon teacups and saucers, 2 coffee pots, aluminum kettles, cream pots, sigris, bottle openers and lemon squeezers, jam pots, wooden butter makers, china ware for vegetable dishes, aluminum dekchies, menu stands, 2½ dozen flower vases, moulds for puddings and jellies, pastry cutters, freezer moulds, pie dishes, cake moulds and coffee roasters.’

This was a large order and a letter in the file provides further insight into the workings of the Residency. It mentions, ‘Payments for purchases in the kitchen are made from the budget provision, Khillat and Tawazoo. Payments are made through the Private Secretary. In the case that there is no budget left, the Guzarish should state that the amount will be paid from the Moghlai kitchen budget.’

Indoor and outdoor sport was also important at Bolarum. Billiards being a male preserve, it is not surprising that before his arrival Sir Stuart Fraser, rather than his wife, wrote to Sir Faridoon Jung enquiring if the billiard table was still at the Residency.⁵⁹

THE OUTDOORS

Outdoor games included tennis, badminton and croquet. Both lawn and hard courts (initially *morrum* or red earth, converted to cement in the 1920s and reconverted back to *morrum* in 1935), were located to the south of the house, in the landscaped area secluded and used as the private gardens.⁶⁰ A letter to the Public Works Department in September 1908 instructed that the ‘Resident (Sir Michael O’Dwyer 1908 and 1909), wishes the Tennis Courts be coloured terracotta so the balls may be seen properly. The *chunam* courts get discoloured in patches and it is difficult to see the balls when playing’. The tennis courts were rolled and lined every Saturday.⁶¹ A fern-house was constructed near the tennis court and its verandah was used to shelter people who watched the game being played.⁶² A badminton court and a croquet ground were also maintained. These games would have been played in company and periodically new benches were ordered for the grounds.⁶³

An interesting feature in the north lawn was a flagstaff, a large portion of which now lies in an outhouse. Although its origins are unknown, it is likely that they are rooted in military history. Towering 110 feet high, the Union Jack fluttering above the tree tops in the Bolarum plain would have been visible throughout the cantonment and beyond. This flagstaff also witnessed several important events in the history of democratic India. In 1948, Azam Jah formally ceded Hyderabad to the Indian Union at the flagstaff’s base. It was also here that M.K. Vellodi took his oath as the first chief minister of Hyderabad state.⁶⁴

Adding to the charm of the bungalow were the gardens, designed in the Picturesque style, combining formal with informal layouts, flower-pots and lawns with tall trees and hedges, ‘... a terrace for a stroll; a rustic summerhouse for a book; all quaint, picturesque and charming’.⁶⁵ Tall hedges and green walls were incorporated into the landscape of the Residency, and a clearly defined terrace is demarcated on all four sides. Potted plants were used extensively closer to the house, so they could be replaced with the changing seasons. In 1914, the garden was described as having palms, crotons, ferns, lilies and various flowers and shrubs. To this were added nine very large pots, 111 large and 1,968 small pots, from the garden of Mr Elsmie Esquire, of Bolarum.⁶⁶ The paths leading away from the house were beaten down red earth, which was rolled down with *morrum* periodically, and they were lined with ornamental lampposts, six to the south and three to the north.⁶⁷

BEHIND THE SCENES

Tending to this simple yet stately home required staff working with clockwork precision. The *darogha* or head butler oversaw a large retinue of workers, orchestrating the *khansamas*, *bawarchis*, *khitmatgars*, *abdars*, *bhishtis*, *dhobis*, *ayahs*, *farashes*, *punkah-wallahs*, orderlies, and the garden staff, comprising the *malis*, *malans*, *farashes* and *jamadars*.^{68 69} The *syces*, farriers, and buggy-wallahs looked after the stables. Sowars of the cavalry and sepoy of the infantry of the Hyderabad Contingent guarded the Residency.⁷⁰

The salaries for the staff were paid for by the Karkhanayat Department of the nizam's government.

Service areas including the kitchen as described above, were located away from the main building, so the mechanics and workings of the Residency House remained invisible to its residents. The kitchen, stores and *dhobi-ghat* were constructed to the east of the main house and the ancillary buildings consisting of stables, cowsheds, fowl-houses, garages and staff quarters to the south-east. A portion of the cowshed was converted to a *motor-khana* in August 1914.⁷¹ The staff quarters were designed in the typical Hyderabadi fashion with a *purdah* wall or external gateway creating a private courtyard around which was accommodation for 20 families. Apart from this, bachelor accommodation for 10 members of staff with a separate entrance, and for eight syces was constructed. Similarly, none of the ancillary buildings would open out directly onto the grounds of the Residency, but were shielded by an external curtain wall. Interestingly, the stables, cowsheds, fowl-houses and *motor-khana* were also surrounded by a walled enclosure. The staff continued to grow and quarters for them were constructed up until 1935.⁷²

Water for the house and gardens was provided by two large wells within the compound. An aqueduct connected the smaller well to the *dhobi-ghat*. To the west are the main *baoli* or well and additional quarters for staff and a pharmacy.

THE TRANSITION

In the last decade leading up to Independence, the Resident gave up Hyderabad altogether and moved to Bolarum. The cantonment was a hub of activity during the Second World War and witnessed a wave of expansion including the establishment of an RAF Airbase at Hakimpet, adjoining Bolarum. The Resident was central to these changes and to the activity and, therefore, chose to base himself there.

In 1947, the Residency House was transferred to the nizam's government, along with the Hyderabad Residency



ABOVE: The motor-khana, previously the stables, with the President of India's fleet

RIGHT: Butlers in the service of the President of India, carrying trays from the kitchen to the dining hall through the underground passageway

FAR RIGHT: One of the original bowlis or wells, still a source of water today







Major General Jyanto Nath Chaudhuri taking down the Hyderabad flag after Azam Jah ceded the state to the Indian Union, 18 September 1948. Raja Deen Dayal and Sons, Secunderabad [Source: The Siasat Daily Archives]

and other political buildings that were used by the British. There were several proposals for the use of the Residency House in the eventful year between August 1947 and September 1948 that led to the annexation of Hyderabad by Indian forces. The Department of Health of the nizam's government wished to make it a tuberculosis sanatorium. Overruling this was an application from the Director of Education to use it as a public school that would have both princes as students.⁷³ Inspections were conducted, with the principals of the Nizam College and the exclusive Madarsa-e-Aliya advising on the modifications required. It was suggested that the buildings constructed for the RAF at Hakimpet be re-acquired by the nizam's government to accommodate all the facilities that were necessary. There was confusion when it was rumoured that the Residency House had been handed over to Azam Jah as his residence. In fact, it remained shut until K.M. Munshi, India's Agent General (5 January–21 September 1948), used it briefly as his residence on the recommendation of Lord Mountbatten from 5 to 15 January 1949. This use was not accepted by the nizam, who was conscious of the political connotations and symbolic supremacy associated with the building.⁷⁴ In fact, when Munshi wished to host a dinner at the Bolarum Residency on the day of his arrival, both Lord Mountbatten and the nizam intervened, permitting only a tea party instead.⁷⁵

Following the merger of Hyderabad state with the Indian Union, the military governor, Major General J.N. Chaudhari, used the Residency House as his official residence. He entertained and met members of Hyderabad society here.⁷⁶ The first chief minister of Hyderabad state, M.K. Vellodi (1949–52), was sworn in on 1 December 1949 in the grounds of the Residency House and used the building as his secretariat.⁷⁷

THE NILAYAM TODAY

In 1955, a decision was taken by the Government of India to make the Residency House the president's 'permanent seasonal residence in the south' and to rename the estate Rashtrapati Nilayam. Hyderabad was ideally located in the

heart of the Deccan Plateau and the presence of the Head of State in a region that had had a difficult transition at Independence would help heal the wounds of 1948.⁷⁸ It was also a strong statement of national integration confirming the status of Hyderabad as an integral part of India.

There have undoubtedly been changes in the conversion of Residency House to Rashtrapati Nilayam and, as a result, the connotations of imperial power are today no longer visible. The ballroom is now the president's drawing room, where he meets visitors. Larger gatherings are addressed in the former billiards room now known as the cinema. The suite of rooms in the east wing once occupied by the resident is allocated to various members of the president's official staff including the ADCs and military secretary.

The focus of the Residency House has shifted from the inside to the outside. Beautifully maintained gardens and orchards now welcome visitors each winter. The magnificent granite boulders and grand old tamarind and mango,⁷⁹ banyan, neem and frangipani trees continue to charm each guest. Groves of mango, pomegranate, guava, custard-apple and coconut have been planted. A herbal garden and the Nakshatra Garden, designed to represent the nine constellations, are meaningful additions to the landscape of the Nilayam.

The Rashtrapati Nilayam has been the home of the President of India for 60 years. In these six decades, it has transformed from being the home of the representative of imperial rule to being that of the constitutional head of the world's largest democracy. As witness to nearly 200 years of history, the Nilayam stands as testimony to political change and upheaval. Will Durant (1885–1981), the American philosopher, has said well, 'History has been too often a picture of the bloody stream. The history of civilization is a record of what happened on the banks.' In the process of uncovering the different layers of information on the Residency House it has been possible to lift the veil of time and understand both the microcosm of family life and the impact of larger events in which the lives of the residents were framed.



Notes

1. This was part of the Subsidiary Alliance Treaty of 1798, in C.U. Atchison (compiled), *A collection of treaties, engagements and sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries* (Calcutta:Government Printing Press, 1909).
2. Omar Khalidi, *The British Residency in Hyderabad: An Outpost of the Raj (1779–1948)*(London:BACSA, 2005), 5.
3. Ibid., 5.
4. The Residency was paid for and maintained by the nizam. Resident Sydenham wrote in 1806, ‘The whole of the premises is, of course, considered to be the property of the Sirkar and if His Highness would determine to complete the building the expenses and superintendence will remain with His Highness, so that the Honorable Company will not be put to any expense.’ Ibid., 6.
5. C.R. Weld (ed.), *Sketches in India taken at Hyderabad and Secunderabad* by Captain Allan Scott (London:Lovell Reeve, 1862), Plate XXI.
6. Ibid.
7. Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali, *Hyderabad Affairs*, vol. I(London:Talbot, 1883), 842.
8. Anonymous, ‘Notes on the Residency’, 3, quoted in Mackenzie Shah Alison, ‘Constructing a capital on the edge of empire: Urban patronage and politics in the Nizam’s Hyderabad, 1750–1950’, Ph.D thesis submitted to the University of Pennsylvania, 2005, chapter 2: ‘Darbar and Diplomacy’, 4.
9. There was a successive line of ministers in the Salar Jung family. Salar Jung’s uncle Siraj ul Mulk (1846–48 and 1851–53), grandfather Munir ul Mulk (1808–32) and great grandfather Mir Alam (1795–97) and 1804–1808) had held the post of minister in the nizam’s court. For nearly a third of the 19th century, the post was held by Mukhtar-ul-Mulk Mir Turab Ali Khan Sir Salar Jung I (1853–83) and it is probable that the fourth building in this ensemble was called the Salar Jung Residence.
10. Telangana State Archives, Instalment nos. 14, 17, 20, 24, 26, 34, 70, 72.
11. Refer to map of Bolarum, 1852, published in Lt. Gen. J.S.Fraser (compiled), ‘Report on the Medical Topography and Statistics of the Nizam’s Military Cantonments and Army’, Christian Knowledge Society’s Press, Madras, 1852.
12. The Kothi existed before 1857 and since construction only began in Bolarum after 1826, it is assumed that it was built during Nasir-ud-Daula’s reign. The third nizam, Sikander Jah, had given his name for the cantonment town of Secunderabad but had focused his building activities at Golconda.
13. Interview with Dr Aminuddin Khan, administrator of the nizam’s private estates (23 March 2015), from his conversations with the Maharaja Sir Kishen Pershad, prime minister of Hyderabad state (1902–12) in the late 1930s.
14. Guests at the Asafia Kothi included Nawab Sir Vicar ul Unra, prime minister of Hyderabad (1893–1901), an officer of the nizam’s army undergoing training at Bolarum and recommended by Sir Afzar-ul-Mulk in 1897, Raja Inder Karan of the Malwala family of Hyderabad, officers from the Hyderabad Contingent and a delegation from the Bank of Bengal in September 1895. Telangana State Archives, Occupation of H.E.H. Bungalow, Bolarum, Telangana State Archives, File nos 41/16/185, 41/17/185.
15. Telangana State Archives, File no. 14/2/909.
16. Interview with Karamat Muffakham Jah (6 January 2015). The former royal vividly recalls being at Kothi Asafia when he heard the news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948.
17. It is possible that this was done later in the 19th century, when such buildings were in vogue in Hyderabad, for example, Asmangarh Palace (1880), Hill Fort Palace (1885). The Doric columns and rectangular fenestration, simpler features of the bungalow remain untouched and strongly indicate that the crenellations were not part of the original design.
18. Central Records Office, Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, 1720–1890, The Central Records Office, Hyderabad, 1954, 261.
19. Moulvi Syed Mahdi Ali (compiled), *Hyderabad Affairs*, vol. II(London:Talbot Brothers), 847.
20. Telangana State Archives, Letter from Salar Jung II written to the resident from Bolarum in 1885 regarding a visit to England, Salar Jung Private Papers, 1880–1889.
21. Telangana State Archives, File no. 14/2/906.
22. British Library, London, Foreign and Political Department, R.1.1.942, Foreign and Political Department, Deposit, Internal PROs; April 1921, no. 55, 34. File D1 (5 April 1921) 55, I.O.R./R/1/1/942.
23. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim, and Nepal* (London:W.H. Allen, 1887), 141, 144, 145.
24. On 22 June 1904 the Military Secretary to the Commander of the Regular Forces wrote to the First Assistant to Maharaja Kishen Pershad regarding the gun salute to be provided at Begumpet station for the resident (Sir David Barr) who was arriving by train from Ooty and who would proceed from there. Telangana State Archives, File no. 20/1/478.
25. British Library, London, Foreign and Political Department, R.1.1.942, Foreign and Political Dept. Deposit, Internal PROs; April 1921, No. 55, 34. File D1 (5 April 1921) 55, I.O.R./R/1/1/942.
26. Krishnaswamy Mudiraj, *Pictorial Hyderabad*, vol. I (Hyderabad:Chandrakanth Press), 150.
27. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad...*, 139.
28. Ibid., 139. In 1868, Resident Temple wrote that a ball was held ‘in the upper

LEFT: An aerial view of the Nilayam

- story of the house [Residency], furbished for the occasion after many years of disuse’.
29. 1886 Foreign Dept Secret 1; Pros June 1886 Nos. 203–226, Question of the Hyderabad Residency from Chadderghat; R/1/1/28,1885, page (5). In 1883, Sir Frederick Roberts (Commander-in-Chief, Madras) wrote strongly about the insecurity of the Residency and fear for the safety of the treasure that was stored there.
 30. There was a proposal from the resident to construct a more befitting Residency north of the Bolarum cantonment in 1921. ‘It is generally known that the majority of Residents have preferred living at Bolarum, which stands some three hundred feet higher and is reputed more healthy, and it would be a matter of no surprise therefore if the Resident preferred to arrange for his permanent accommodation in a more favourable locality.’ Foreign and Political Department, R.1.1.942, Foreign and Political Department Deposit, Internal PROs; April 1921, no. 55, 34. File D1 (5 April 1921) 55, I.O.R./R/1/1/942, British Library, London.
 31. Proposal of the resident at Hyderabad to construct a new Residency north of the Bolarum Cantonment. British Library, London, Foreign and Political Department (R.1.1.942) & Political Department Deposit Internal Pros. April 1921, nos. 55, 34.
 32. Ibid.
 33. Ibid. Reply from the Political Secretary, Delhi, dated 26 March 1921.
 34. The word ‘bungalow’ comes from the word *bangla* from Bengal. In the 17th century, *bangla* was used to describe the very distinctive peasant huts of rural Bengal. Evidence suggests that early Europeans used these temporary huts when travelling in India. The earliest reference to the word in English is in 1659.
 35. W. Briggs, *Country Houses and Bungalows*, 1891, 1.
 36. This is the area of the Nilayam today. Although it has increased, the original plot size would not have been much smaller.
 37. The five that have been closed are the ones that lead to the golf course (originally the parade ground), the Asafia Kothi, the Bolarum Bazaar road (via the Andhra Sub-Area today), to the Bolarum Cantonment, and to the present day post office (perhaps originally the road that led to the Abbey and Church beyond).
 38. In his *Treatise on Architecture*, the Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554) called the Tuscan Order ‘suitable to fortified places, such as city gates, fortresses, castles, treasuries, or where artillery and ammunition are kept, prisons, seaports and other similar structures used in war.’
 39. The use of the unadorned Tuscan form became a symbol of the evolution of the ‘Indian prototype into a European building form but also of the commercial and military might of Britain’.
 40. Anthony King, *The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 38. Did you add this number here Malini because it was not in my printout
 41. Briggs, *Country Houses...*, 4.
 42. It is unlikely that an architect designed the building. The Hyderabad Residency was designed by Samuel Russell, an officer of the Madras Engineers. This was the norm and in all likelihood this would have been the case at Bolarum too.
 43. This is a British phrase used to highlight the social and class hierarchy of the lives of the servants: ‘downstairs’, and their masters: ‘upstairs’.
 44. In 1910 the budget for maintenance was Rs 3,000. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/309.
 45. In 1935, a triennium budget of Rs 54,000 was given to the political buildings under the PWD. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/122. Where the budget was exceeded, a detailed bill from the concerned department was provided along with a note specifying from which fund the money was taken to cover costs. This is also extra number
 46. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/348.
 47. Ibid.
 48. Ibid.
 49. Letter from Mrs Violet Pinehy to Fardoonji on 27 February 1916. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/288.
 50. 1916: Electric installation at the Residency by the British lighting firm Osler. Telangana State Archives, File no: 26 /1/314.
 51. 13 June 1915: The *darogah* of the Bolarum Residency listed items sent to the stores—2 thermantidotes, kitchen stove, baroness range, 18 *pankah* poles. Telangana State Archives, File no: 26/1/318.
 52. 26 August 1912: The PWD lists the items of work carried out: Steeonite—timbering fixing, painting 2 coats special white enamel for drawing room including cornice and 9 rosettes for *pankah* and light size 30ft x 30ft x 600 ft. Rs 600. Wren Bennett & Co. Ltd. Telangana State Archives, File no: 26/1/321.
 53. 31 July 190: A bill for Rs 140 from Messrs Roberts & Co., Bombay, for the cost of wallpaper supplied to the Bolarum Residency, confirmed by the first resident William Haig in a letter to Sir Faridoon Jung; 27 July 1907: Painting and wall papering of the drawing room letter of bill to the District Engineer PWD; 1912—Mrs Pinhey—wall paper for the drawing room from England. Telangana State Archives, File no: 26/1/1404,1405.

54. Receipt Letter from Constance Fraser to Fardoonji on taking up quarters at Bolarum dated 12.06.1916. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/288.
55. 17 January 1896: Receipt of polishing flooring of new ballroom; 8 June 1926: Letter to Political Department regarding reconstruction of a wooden floor in the drawing room and provision of Warangal durries in the rooms.
56. 10 August 1912: Making charges for special designs cream old rose, 15'2" x 25'2" carpets in wool. Otto Weyland & Co., Carpet manufacturers and Export, Agra. In August 1916, Lady Pinhey purchased carpets from England for £105 from W.H. Haynes, Paddington, London. 3 brown carpets with brown border.
57. The furniture was entered in the darogah's books. Telangana State Archives. Installment nos. 26, 34, 72.
58. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/1416.
59. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/1418.
60. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/112.
61. 19 November 1912: Wrenn Bennett & Co.—Bolarum Residency upholstery. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/345.
62. A list of receipts available at the Telangana State Archives include those for furniture and furnishings amongst others. A. Abid & Co. Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Badham and Pile, Wren Bennett & Co. Ltd., Abdul Ghafoor & Sons, Sheikh Oomar & Co., and Mohammed Moosa & Co., Secunderabad, Messrs Roberts & Co., Rose & Co., and Army and Navy Stores, Bombay, Richardson and Cruddas and Spencer & Co., Madras, Otto Weyland & Co., Agra, King & Co., W.H. Haynes & Co., and Hampton & Sons, London. Several purchases were made by Lady Violet Pinhey (November 1915) and in 1916 by Lady Constance Fraser. Telangana State Archives, Installment no. 26.
63. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/1402.
64. Telangana State Archives, File no. 24/2/123.
65. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/124.
66. 6 September 1913: Roofing of verandah of the new fern house in the garden to shelter people who watched tennis. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/245.
67. 17 January 1896: Two benches for lawn tennis ground, turfing and wire fencing for croquet ground. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/1415.
68. In 2011, the flagstaff was taken down due to concerns regarding the safety of the building.
69. Briggs, *Country Houses* ..., 3.
70. In July 1914, several terracotta flowerpots were purchased for the Residency. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/391.
71. Electrification provided for the grounds—Osler: 6 lamp posts in the south area, 3 in the north area, Macfarlanes Ornamental lamp posts 8'6" high with lanterns 14" diameter. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/314.
72. In 1896, Rahman Khan was the *darogah* at the Residency House and his salary was Rs 20 with an additional mensem of Rs 5 towards house rent. The post of the *darogah* was transferrable and in 1897, the *darogah* Ismail Khan was transferred from Asafia Kothi to the Residency House. Telangana State Archives, File no. 24/2/205.
73. A letter dated 4 September 1915 from the chief engineer to the Secretary to the Government PWD—the *darogah* has 15 malis, 15 malans, 2 carts and 6 pairs of bullocks at the Residency. Telangana State Archives, File no. 24/2/282.
74. 17 January 1896: Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/129.
75. 13 August 1914: Cowshed converted to coach house and motor stand Rs 1,537. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/477.
76. 23 March 1935: Construction of quarters for butler and 3 ayahs. Telangana State Archives, File no. 26/1/306.
77. Application for Bolarum Residency as a public school 1 Aban 1356 F (November 1947). Telangana State Archives, File no. 70/1/ 202.
78. The return of the British occupied buildings to the nizam's government was regarded as symbolic to the extent that their mention was incorporated as one of the terms of the Standstill Agreement.
79. Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad* (Karachi: Pakistan Cooperative Book Society, 1962), 67.
80. Interviews with Dr Aminuddin Khan, Indira Dhanrajgir, Bilquees Latif.
81. Chief Minister's Secretariat, letter dated 31 March 1950. Letter from the P.S. to the Nizam's Peshi with the Bolarum Residency on the letterhead. The Chowmahalla Palace Archives, File no. 50/126/CM.
82. National Archives, New Delhi, File no. 106/55: 1955, 166.
83. Mango and tamarind trees are traditionally planted together in the Deccan.



The Falaknuma Palace of the nizam of Hyderabad, where Governor-General C. Rajagopalachari and President Rajendra Prasad stayed on their initial visits to Hyderabad

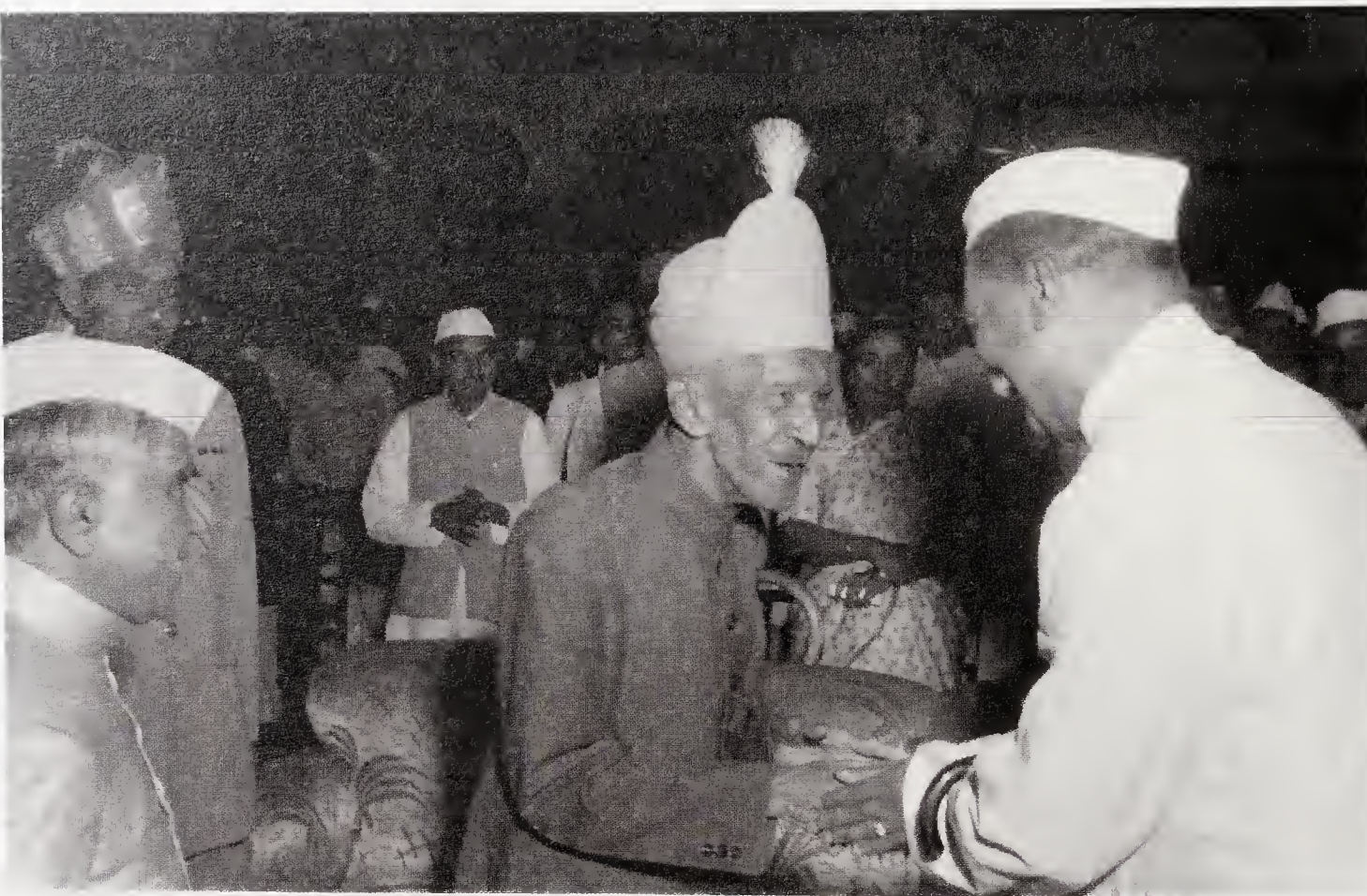
THE SOUTHERN SOJOURN

Gillian Wright

On 23 June 1956 President Rajendra Prasad's special train steamed into Secunderabad station. Waiting for him on the platform were the nizam of Hyderabad, the chief minister, Dr Burgala Ramakrishna Rao, the prince of Berar, the speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the chief justice and a host of ministers, officials and prominent citizens. As the train drew to a halt, the president, wearing his customary Gandhi cap and an immaculate achkan and churidar pajamas, smiled cheerfully, stepped out and shook the nizam warmly by the hand. The chief minister then introduced him to the others lined up to welcome him. This formality over, the president inspected the Guard of Honour drawn up in the station yard and drove off to the Rashtrapati Nilayam, followed by a fleet of cars and cheered by crowds on the main streets of Secunderabad and Bolarum.¹ This was the year Rajendra Prasad inaugurated what the newspapers called 'the South Indian Seat of the President'. India as an independent nation was still young, and in the cause of national integration it had been decided that the Head of State should have a home of his own in the south.

This was not Rajendra Prasad's first visit to Hyderabad since becoming president. That had been in 1951, when he had been the guest of the nizam in the splendid Falaknuma Palace, with its commanding views over the city. The nizam had himself escorted Rajendra Prasad to his room on the ground floor of Falaknuma. A few hours later the president had paid a formal visit to him at his home in the King Kothi palace,² following a precedent set by the governor-general, C. Rajagopalachari, during his three-day visit to Hyderabad in December 1949. Rajaji had been the first Indian guest to stay at Falaknuma, which had until then been reserved for viceroys and members of the British royal family.³

Rajaji and the nizam had both been building bridges after a troubled beginning to the relationship between Hyderabad and independent India. The nizam had not acceded to the Union in 1947 with the other princely states. During protracted and unsuccessful negotiations with the Union government, he had allowed a separatist Muslim armed force, the Razakars, to run loose creating a reign of fear. At the same time in Telangana, the Communist Party of India (CPI), taking advantage of the



departure of the British, had led a successful peasant revolt that had 'liberated' around a thousand villages from the control of the state.⁴ In September 1948, the decision was finally made to send the Indian army into Hyderabad. The state forces put up little resistance and on 17 September their commander, Major-General Syed Ahmed El-Edroos, surrendered at Secunderabad to Major-General Jyanto Nath Chaudhuri of the Indian army, a distinguished officer who went on to become Chief of Army Staff. In the period of instability during and immediately after this operation many people, most of them Muslims, were reported killed.⁵ Peace was restored and before Rajaji's visit, General Chaudhuri stepped down as military governor. The senior ICS officer, M.K. Vellodi, was sworn in as Hyderabad's first chief minister⁶ in the ceremony that took place beneath the flagstaff in the garden of the building that had once been the Bolaram Residency, had then served as the residence of General Chaudhuri,⁷ and was to become the Rashtrapati Nilayam.

Rajaji was given a rousing welcome by the citizens of Hyderabad and he did all he could to reach out to them during his brief visit. At the symbol of Hyderabad, the Charminar, standing before a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, he received a joint civic address from the municipalities

of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and the 350-year monument was opened for public entry for the first time. He spoke at Osmania University, attended a garden party for a thousand guests in the Jubilee Gardens, opened All-India Industrial and Art exhibitions, and called on Dr M.G. Naidu, the husband of the poet and freedom fighter, Sarojini Naidu, one of the city's most beloved daughters, who had passed away earlier that year.⁸

Just over a month later, great public celebrations marked the inauguration of the Constitution during which the nizam was invested with the role of Raj Pramukh. A prolific poet who used the penname 'Osman', he immediately wrote eight Persian couplets in praise of the day, proclaiming:

*The tidings that from Delhi's walls sang wide
Brought solace to all hearts, and joy and pride
To hearts released from bonds of caste and race
Yes, hearts that only bend before God's grace....
The new Dawn's greetings, 'Osman', rich and strange
And the four quarters hail the promised change.⁹*

The following year Rajendra Prasad's secretary, Valmiki Chaudhuri, was one of the party who accompanied the



FAR LEFT: The nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan, also the raj pramukh of the state, shaking hands with President Rajendra Prasad on his arrival at Secunderabad railway station [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

LEFT: President Rajendra Prasad inspecting his guard of honour in the Secunderabad station yard [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

president to the nizam's palace. Seeing one of the world's richest men dressed in an old achkan and socks with holes in them, Valmiki was simultaneously filled with pity and amazement. He found the King Kothi, like its owner, very dilapidated, with patched hessian curtains hanging over doorways, plaster flaking off the walls, and the sitting room furnished with an ancient sofa and faded rugs. Valmiki was not sure whether to call this carelessness or miserliness.¹⁰ The last nizam's parsimony was legendary, and on the 1956 visit, the president's ADC, Rajan Vir, was similarly surprised at the state of King Kothi and by the nizam appearing to be in the pajamas he had slept in.¹¹ But however miserly the nizam may have been, he was a most generous host.

A magnificent banquet was thrown in Hyderabad's Jubilee hall to mark Rajendra Prasad's maiden visit. The nizam proposed toasts to India and the president and the band struck up 'Jana Gana Mana'. Then the president toasted the nizam, the band responding with 'God Bless the Nizam'.¹² Over the following years, the president made every effort to maintain all the courtesies. In letters he addressed the nizam as 'Dear Friend', and accepted his invitation to see his collection of alams, standards of mixed silver and gold displayed in Moharram in the memory of the Prophet's

grandson Husain's martyrdom at Karbala.¹³ The nizam now paid formal calls on the president at the Nilayam.¹⁴

Lakshmi Devi Raj, a leading figure in the revival of traditional Andhra textiles whose father was a surgeon in the nizam's service, calls herself a 'pukki proud Hyderabad'. She explains the loyalty the nizam inspired in many Hyderabadis for whom the troubles around 1947 could not wipe out years of development. To the nizams went the credit for educational institutions like Osmania University, for hospitals, and the achievements of the City's Improvement Board. The Asaf Jahi dynasty had also presided over a remarkable, generous-spirited, syncretic society. As Lakshmi Devi Raj remembers, 'We were all one big family, all celebrated each other's festivals. When someone asked us to a wedding, Muslim or Hindu, we would accept and spend three or four days there.'¹⁵ Khaja Ahmedullah, the grandson of one of the longest serving diwans of Hyderabad, Krishen Pershad, who was himself the descendent of the Mughal emperor Akbar's nauratan, Todar Mal, is also full of praise for the city's Ganga-Jamuni culture. His grandfather was a remarkable example of that. His Hindu wives brought their children up as Hindus, and Muslim wives brought their children up as Muslims. The diwan himself had a Sufi disposition, wrote poetry in



The Falaknuma Palace, now restored to its former glory



Urdu and Persian under the penname Shaad or 'Happy', and considered both the sixth nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, and the celebrated poet Dagh Dehlavi, who joined the Hyderabad court, as his ustaads.¹⁶

In those days, and indeed well into the 1960s, the cantonment of Secunderabad was not considered by Hyderabadis to be part of their city. Khaja Ahmedullah recalls that Secunderabad meant little more than the club, English movies and sports. The Plaza scored over the two other theatres because it had a bar that meant you could have a drink before, after and during a movie, a facility unthinkable in Hyderabad. A number of Indian national players honed their skills on the cricket fields of Secunderabad, and polo was and remains a flourishing sport.

BOLARUM, THE RESIDENT AND THE VICEROY

The cool morning breezes of Bolarum still make it easy to understand why from the 19th century it was considered the healthiest part of the cantonments and why living there was as much a pleasure as a duty. During the 1860s, the Resident Richard Temple, invited the Diwan Salar Jung to stay with him at the Residency House. Salar Jung declined, as this would mean taking permission from the nizam with whom his relations at this point were delicate, but he did come to Bolarum for the day.

Together the two toured the military establishments of Secunderabad. In Trimulgherry they inspected the workshops of the PWD where they saw immense logs being sawn by steam power and elaborate carpentry done by a 'general joiner machine'. The diwan then rode with the resident in his carriage to Bolarum to watch a review of the contingent. The cavalry was at its best. As Temple recorded in his diary, 'The setting sun shining over the green grassy plain and the glittering troops made a very pretty sight. After the review I introduced to him the Native Officers—the European officers he knew before. Then I drove him . . . through the Artillery lines and stables, and thence home by the town of Balaram [sic] to the Balaram Residency, where he dined with me.'¹⁷

Viceregal tours were often planned at meetings at Bolarum¹⁸ but only one viceroy ever stayed there. That was during the first viceregal visit in 1884 when Lord Ripon travelled from Kolkata to formally invest the young Nizam Mahboob Ali Khan with administrative powers. Ripon was originally to stay in Kirkpatrick's Hyderabad Residency but an outbreak of cholera in the bazaars made this unwise. Instead he and the commander-in-chief of the Madras army moved into the Bolarum bungalow, their staff accommodated in tents in the garden. The governor of Madras was put up at Salar Jung's house, the commander-in-chief of India in another. In addition, an extensive and splendid encampment for the remaining guests was set up in 'picturesque and agreeable surroundings' next to the Residency compound.

Bolarum thus became a centre of activity with visits from the nizam and his nobles, a firework display and dinners at the Residency. On the eve of the investiture ceremony, the viceroy held a levee, at which European and Indian employees of Hyderabad state and all the Indian officers of the regiments at Secunderabad and Bolarum were presented to him. There were also many non-official guests, and the resident had issued a general invitation to the ladies of the station. Once the levee was over, the room was cleared, the Hyderabad Contingent's string band struck up, and the dancing began.¹⁹

Later viceroys always made a point to visit the troops stationed in the cantonments. In 1919, after the Great War in which 1,440,437 Indians served and 74,190 lost their lives,²⁰ Lord Chelmsford held a tea and reception at the Bolarum Residency for British and Indian officers of all regiments, corps and departments. Only Indian officers were formerly presented. Forming up in order of seniority by units, they filed past the viceroy, saluting and offering their swords as their commanding officers introduced them. The function was reported as giving much satisfaction to Indian troops. In 1933, the Earl of Willingdon too chose the Residency to meet some hundred Indian and British officers of the garrison, preferring to shake hands with each one rather than being saluted with swords.²¹

With the departure of the last representatives of the Raj at Independence, this historic bungalow faced an uncertain future, finding fresh purpose with the arrival of Rajendra Prasad that June afternoon in 1956. From that moment on it became the president's official retreat, at once his office and his residence, a place to work and a place to relax.

THE PRESIDENT ON TOUR

In the 1950s even the 36-hour train journey was what Rajendra Prasad termed 'leisurely'.²² Not that the journey was without its uses. In an era before omnipresent electronic media it gave the president visibility in far-flung places. Commodore Rajan Vir, ADC to the president in his first two years at the Nilayam, remembers that whenever the train stopped, as it did frequently, the president would come to the door of his saloon to greet the officials and members of the public assembled on the platform. Rajendra Prasad's choice of transport also demonstrated his belief in the need for a modernised rail network and from Bolarum he wrote to the railway minister, Jagjivan Ram, suggesting that, instead of remodelling stations, he concentrate on building more lines.²³

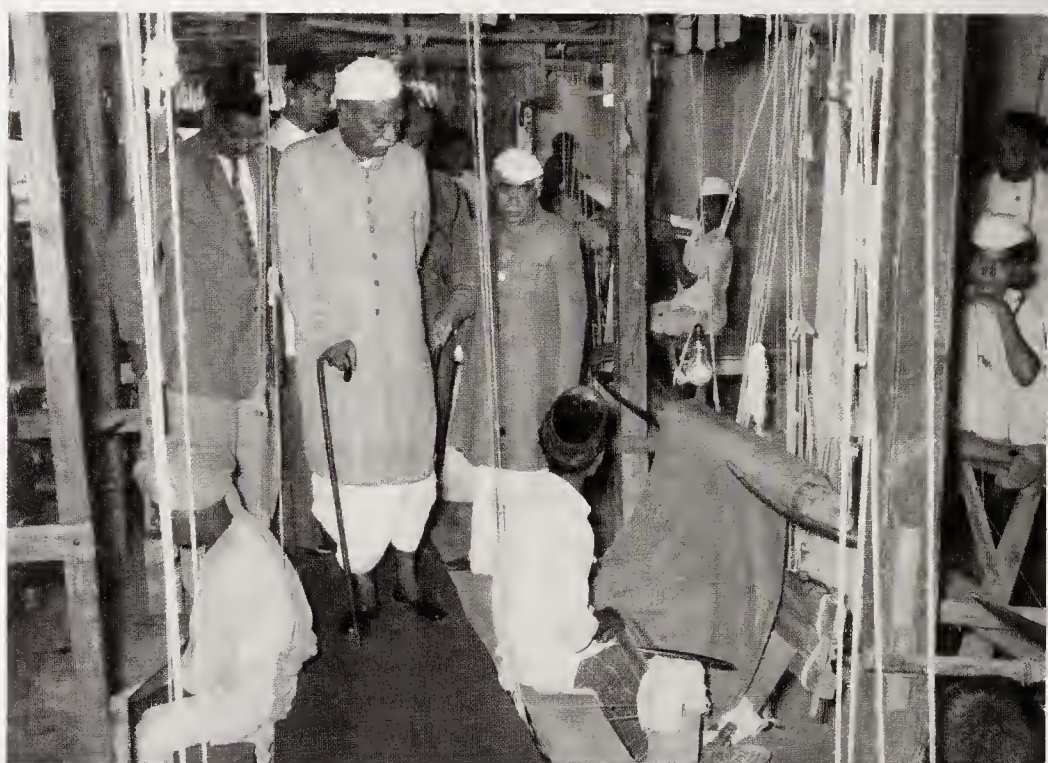
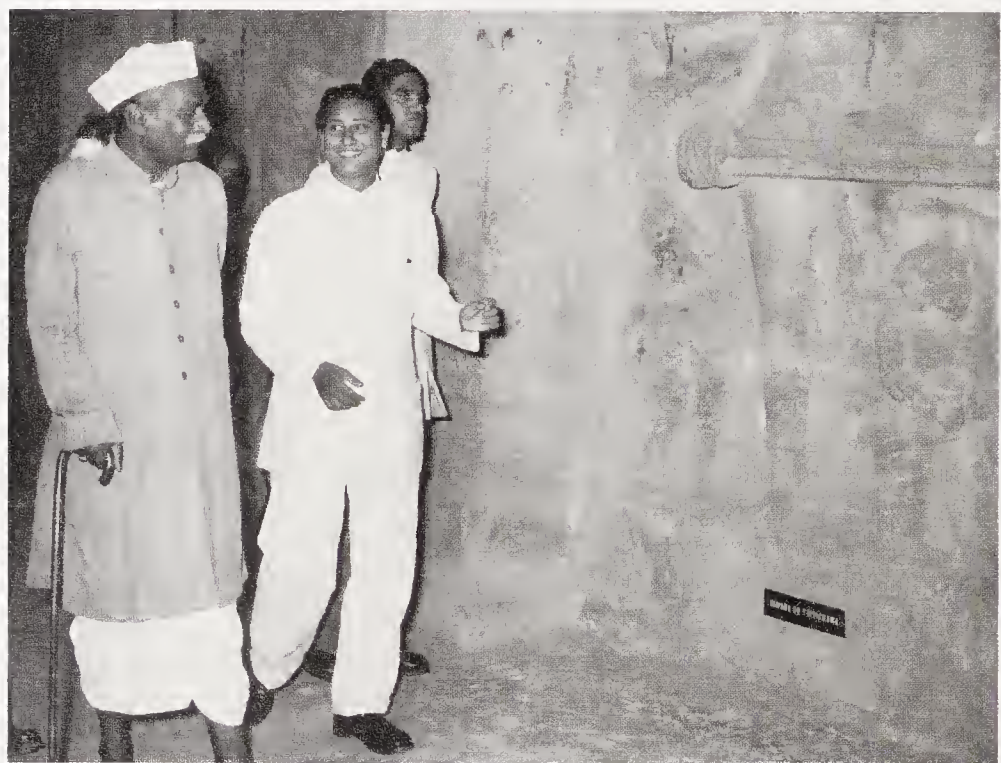
For ADCs like Rajan Vir, working with the president was the experience of a lifetime and his former ADC remembers him as a brilliant but very humble man, unfailingly polite and never known to raise his voice. The ADCs, as they still do today, stayed in one wing of the Nilayam and some of the household staff had been in service since the days of the Raj. Rajan Vir recalls that the signal for the ADC on duty that the president had finished his morning correspondence and was coming out of his private rooms was the announcement, '*Lat Sahib ne kapre mange hain*' or the *Lat Sahib* has called for his clothes, meaning his shoes and cap.

Rajendra Prasad took to his role in the south with great enthusiasm. In 1956, the map of India was about to change forever with the introduction of linguistic states. Hyderabad state would cease to exist, Marathi-speaking areas being merged with the Bombay state, Kannada-speaking areas becoming part of the Mysore state, and the

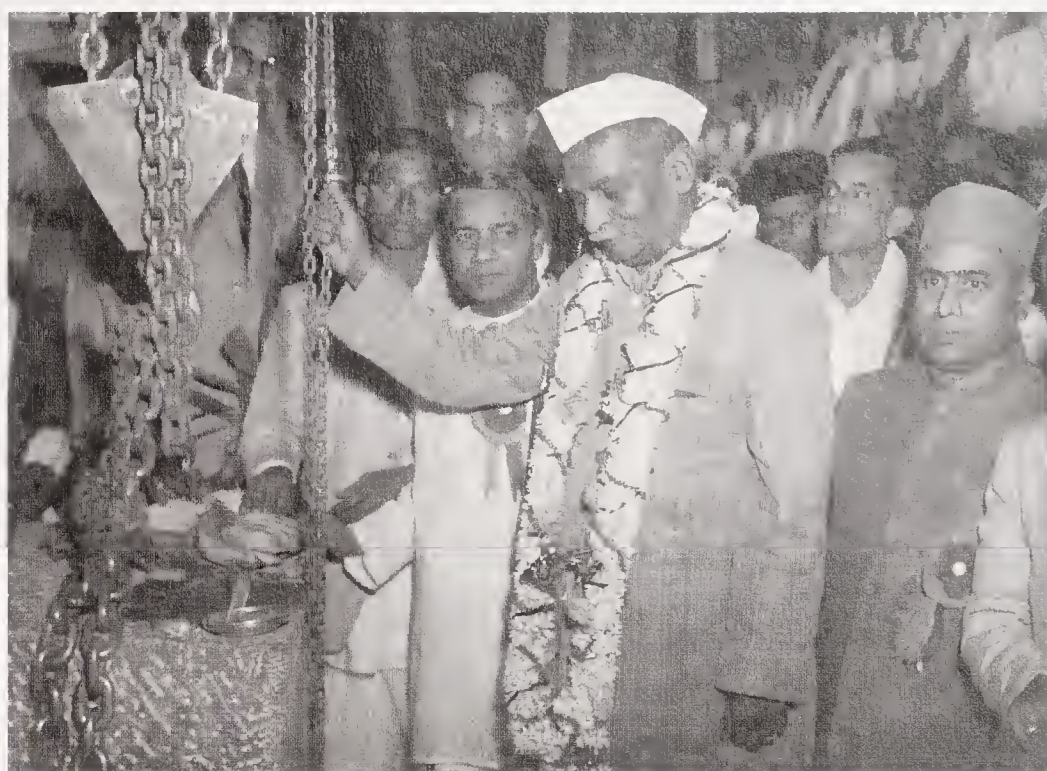
Telugu-speaking region of Telangana being joined with Andhra to form Andhra Pradesh. The president made a point to travel from Bolarum to Bidar, a district that was to be divided three ways. In a speech reported, like all his engagements in the south, as front-page news, he reassured citizens about the change, and emphasised that the important thing to remember was that India was one, and that all problems would be faced unitedly.²⁴

Throughout his visits he chose to highlight places and issues that symbolised national integration, Indian heritage and Gandhian values. At Bidar he went first to the Sufi dargah of Khwaja Abul Faiz, the grandson of the saint Khwaja Banda Nawaz, whose tomb in Gulbarga still draws large numbers of both Hindus and Muslims. An official from the Archaeological Survey then guided him around the ruins of the medieval fort, and at a historic madrasa he examined rare manuscripts. Bidar was and remains famous for bidriware, vessels decorated with inlay of silver and gold wire, and the president spent time with craftspeople at the co-operative society they had founded.²⁵

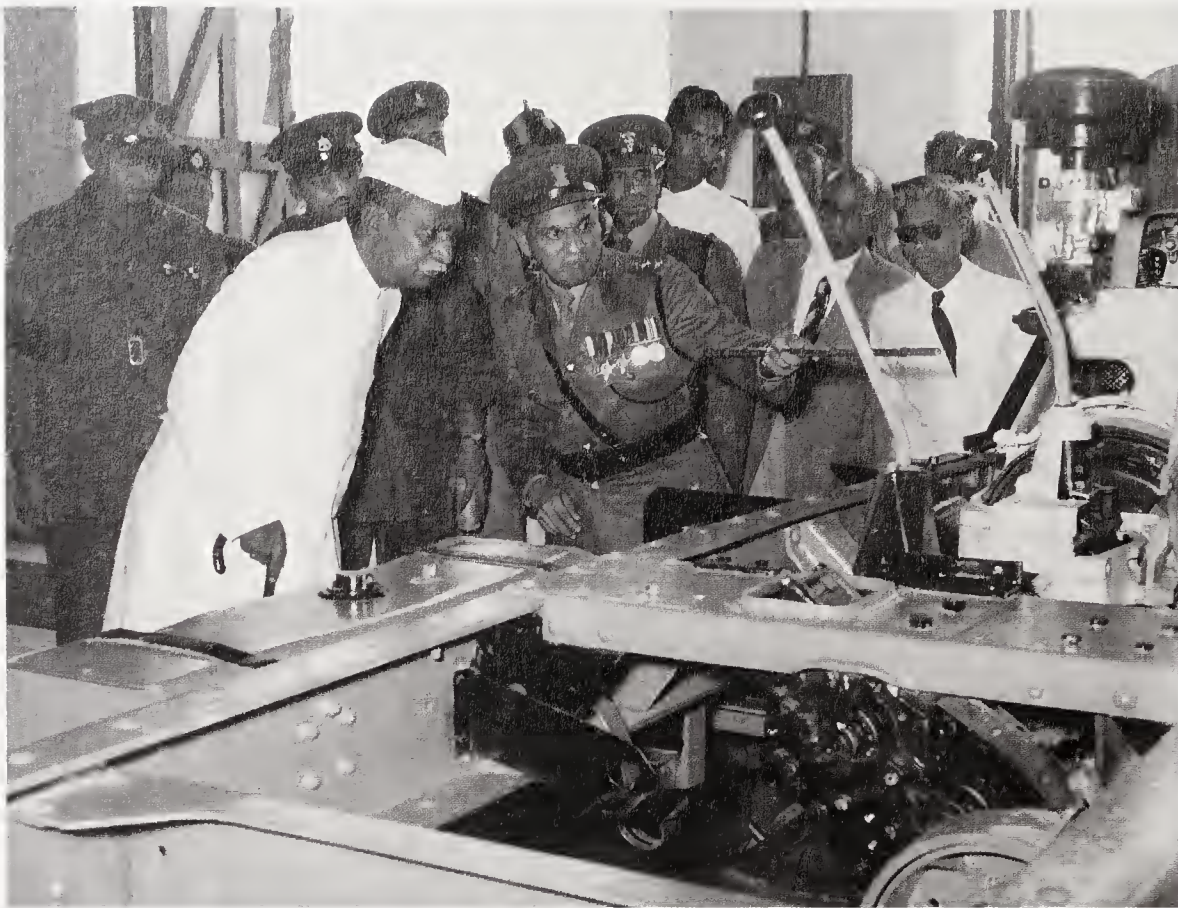
Two days later, he was back in Hyderabad laying the foundation stone of a Sanskrit college among the chanting of Vedic hymns, and emphasising the importance of Sanskrit as a focal point of cultural unity.²⁶ The promotion of Hindi was another cause dear to his heart. Mahatma Gandhi had founded the Dakshin Hindi Prachar Sabha in 1918, and Rajendra Prasad was its president from 1948. He held meetings of the Sabha at the Nilayam, and in 1956 addressed a Hindi Prachar Sammelan in Hyderabad. Sensing the resistance to Hindi as the national language in some areas of the south, he argued that the propagation of Hindi was not intended in any way to diminish other Indian languages, but to provide an Indian language, rather than English, to bring about 'co-ordination and a sense of unity among the various regions of this great country'.²⁷ Gandhian Sarvodaya workers found a ready listener when they visited the president at the Nilayam, and on at least one occasion he joined the Andhra Pradesh Sarvodaya Sammelan Mandal at the Sadhana Mandir in Bolarum, where Vinoba Bhave had once stayed.²⁸ Vinoba's Bhoodan Movement—the



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: President Rajendra Prasad on his arrival by special train at Bidar in 1956 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president studying rare manuscripts in the collection of the Madrasa-e-Mahmood Gawa (College of Oriental Learning) at Bidar [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president on a visit to Ellora, then part of Hyderabad state, on 4 July 1956 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president with handloom weavers in Aurangabad [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: The president investing Madapati Hanumantha Rao, the former mayor of Hyderabad, with the Padma Bhushan at a ceremony at the Nilayam [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president with women of the banjara community who attended an at-home reception at the Nilayam [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president laying the foundation stone of the Sri Venkateswara Vedanta Vardhini Sanskrit College, Hyderabad [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; and the president enjoying a meeting with Sarvodaya Workers at the Nilayam [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: President Rajendra Prasad inspecting the Independence Parade at Hyderabad in 1959 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; President Zakir Husain laying the foundation stone for the Air Force Academy, Hyderabad in October 1967 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; The president and supreme commander of the Indian Armed Forces touring the centre of the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME) and the Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) at Secunderabad [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; a visit to the Nilayam is also an opportunity to spend time with family. Here Dr S. Radhakrishnan is seen with his grandson, Babu [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; and President Zakir Husain hosting an at-home reception at the Nilayam for editors [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: President S. Radhakrishnan shows his appreciation for the hard work of this staff by hosting a tea party especially for them [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; even after the division of the state, the nizam of Hyderabad continued to be an honoured guest at the Nilayam. Here he is seen with Dr S. Radhakrishnan [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]; President S. Radhakrishnan acknowledging the greetings of the enthusiastic crowds who came to welcome him on his arrival at Begumpet airport, Hyderabad, in July 1962 [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]; and Dr S. Radhakrishnan took a keen interest in science as well as the arts and is here show on a visit to the Regional Research Laboratory, Hyderabad [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

donation of land for redistribution to the landless—met with a good response in areas such as Telangana.

As commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Rajendra Prasad naturally took great interest in the army units stationed at Secunderabad and Bolarum, particularly the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (EME), and the Army Ordinance Corps (AOC).²⁹ In 1959, he celebrated Independence Day in Secunderabad, taking the salute at a ceremonial military parade before hosting a traditional at-home reception at the Jubilee Hall Public Gardens in Hyderabad.³⁰

Each president brought his own style to life at the Nilayam. Shortly after being elected as the second President of India in May 1962, S. Radhakrishnan made his first visit, staying for a few weeks with Jawaharlal Nehru as his personal guest for two days.³¹

The Sahitya Akademi and Padma Shri awardee, Prabhjot Kaur, has clear memories of the Nilayam during the years when her husband, Narendra Pal Singh, was Radhakrishnan's deputy military secretary and comptroller of the president's household. A poet and writer, even before her husband was posted with the president, she had translated into Punjabi Radhakrishnan's 'An Idealist View of Life', a collection of lectures he delivered in 1929. With their wide-ranging interest in philosophy and the arts, the couple fitted well into his household. Prabhjot even addressed him as 'Father'. Every summer, or early monsoon, they and their two daughters would fly down to Hyderabad.³²

To their teenage daughter Nirupama, the Nilayam seemed dreary in comparison with the immaculate Rashtrapati Bhavan and she wondered why they had to come every year to this bungalow surrounded by trees and dead leaves where she always feared snakes were lurking. Admittedly there was a table tennis table and she and her sister enjoyed playing. If Radhakrishnan was passing by, he too would pick up a bat and join them for a few minutes. Nirupama remembers that he always had a twinkle in his eye, and just his presence filled everything with light. Life at the

Nilayam was always lively no matter what she thought about the surroundings. As she told me, 'He could hold people spellbound, and say lofty things in a way that could be understood by ordinary people.'³³

Radhakrishnan was by nature a patron of the arts. Most evenings at the Nilayam there would be dance performances of Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi or Odissi, or classical music concerts. Prabhjot Kaur remembers that M.S. Subbulakshmi would come to visit and so would Rukmini Devi Arundale, the founder of Kalakshetra, and Padmaja Naidu, the daughter of the poet and freedom fighter, Sarojini Naidu. Sometimes a film director would ask permission to show the president a film that he had just made, generally either in Hindi or Telugu, and then a screen would be erected and the children of the staff would come and sit on the floor in front, while the president, his family and guests would sit on chairs behind to watch. There were more guests at such performances in the Nilayam than in Delhi, as the atmosphere was more relaxed and holiday-like.

Even today one of the largest rooms in the central block of the Nilayam is called the cinema. Small square holes are cut high in the thick outer wall and a projection room, constructed when V.V. Giri was president,³⁴ stands on the roof of the verandah outside. This houses two beautiful 35mm B-5 Bauer film projectors, made in Germany sometime between 1938 and 1953, and purchased from 'Bauer International Talkie Equipment, Bombay'.³⁵

Poets and writers would also call on President Radhakrishnan. Prabhjot Kaur recalls that although he didn't read Urdu, there was no question those days of not understanding it. Among the poets she remembers coming to meet the president was Makhdoom Moinuddin, a leading figure in the Progressive Writers' Movement and a committed communist who entered electoral politics and served many years as Leader of the Opposition in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

In the mornings Prabhjot would read aloud to the president from the newspapers as his sight was weakening.

The house, which he shared with his son, the eminent historian S. Gopal and daughter-in-law Indira, would be scented with incense, and full of the sound of Carnatic music with the gramophone records carefully chosen so that the ragas played suited the time of day. Most years, Prabhjot and her family stayed in the ADC wing of the main Nilayam building, but one year they stayed in another building on the estate. On her birthday, 6 July, that year she heard a knock on the door. She opened it to find the president standing there with his ADC. Into her hand he put a hundred-rupee note, much bigger than the hundred-rupee notes of today.

‘He was very fond of me,’ she recalls, ‘and he encouraged me to translate Romain Rolland and Ghalib into Punjabi, which I did. I still have that hundred-rupee note.’³⁶

President Zakir Husain, who succeeded Radhakrishnan, unfortunately passed away only two years into his term. A renowned educationalist who spent over three decades of his life running Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi and Aligarh Muslim University, his interests encompassed literature and the arts as well as the natural world, including rocks and fossils. He loved to collect varieties of roses and cacti,³⁷ and must have taken great pleasure in the great boulders and gardens of the Nilayam. Lieutenant-Colonel R.V.M. Menon who served as his ADC, remembers that he encouraged his young aides-de-camp to widen their knowledge and learn at least the names of flowers. Another of R.V.M. Menon’s lasting memories is of the great flagstaff that was still in place on the north lawns. A lone bugler would play as the tricolor was hoisted in the morning, and again as it was lowered each evening.³⁸

A PLACE FOR SPORTS AND QUIET WALKS

Among the many presidential engagements were sporting ones, from football tournaments to horse racing. Hyderabad has long been a centre of equestrian sport and since 1970 a feature of the Hyderabad Monsoon Races has been the President of India Gold Cup.

One of the most active sportspersons among India’s presidents was Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. While at Cambridge he had played for the Combined Universities Hockey Team made up of Indian students in Britain. The team was highly successful, and its captain went on to lead India. By the time he became president, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed had restricted himself to golf, but he requested a senior Indian tennis coach to invite the most promising under-19 tennis players to play on the courts at the Nilayam.³⁹

Unless there were monsoon showers, every day the president himself would play an early morning round of golf on the army’s course just outside the Nilayam’s boundary walls. Opened in 1888, Lady Irwin, wife of the viceroy Lord Irwin, played two rounds there during the viceregal tour of Hyderabad in 1929,⁴⁰ and during his visit in December 1944, the viceroy Field Marshal Viscount Wavell chose to play a single with the British Resident, no doubt at the same time being briefed on state politics.⁴¹

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed’s purpose was recreation. He generally played a ‘four ball’, that is with three other players. Sometimes the military secretary would join him, sometimes the ADCs and sometimes army officers posted in the cantonment. Often, one of the four would be his son, Badar Durrez, whose university vacations coincided with the president’s visit. He remembers the rocky landscape and the remarkable fact that the course didn’t have greens. Instead it had ‘browns’, the bare earth being carefully prepared so that it played smoothly.⁴² Nowadays a year-round water supply ensures the greens are green.

Walking the Nilayam grounds is a form of exercise that all presidents have enjoyed, although for many years this was a semi-jungle experience. The outlying areas of the estate were left to their own devices for most of the year. Then when the president was about to arrive, gardeners went into action and the snake squad was sent in to remove the abundant snakes. That operation was never completely successful and the snakes’ reputation grew and grew. Badar Durrez was told that a great bearded snake lived in one of the old wells in the garden. He kept his camera ready, but reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was a myth.



ABOVE: President Pranab Mukherjee enjoys a morning walk, passing the slope of one of the old wells, now a flower bed, where oxen would have originally drawn water

RIGHT: A keen sportsman, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed has so far been the only president to be a regular player at Bolarum's golf course [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]



No attempts were ever made to evict scorpions, and the unwritten rule of the house was never to put on your shoes without turning them upside down and giving them a good shake.

Order was brought to the estate's wilderness once and for all by the president who probably spent less time at the Nilayam than any other, perhaps his longest visit being when he hosted a bio-diesel workshop. This was, of course, the scientist, President Abdul Kalam. Under his direction a tractor was sent in to clear the jungle and orchards were planted in the orange earth and fed by drip irrigation. In serried rows now stand hundreds of coconut palms and pomegranate, sapote, guava, mango, amla and chiku trees.⁴³ Under his instructions too, work started on the 7,000-square-metre herbal garden where now flourish well over a hundred species of plants, including annuals, perennials, creepers, shrubs and trees.

Created by a team from the Rashtrapati Bhavan CPWD, the National Medicinal Plants Board and the Andhra Pradesh Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Board, and formally inaugurated by President Pratibha Devisingh Patil in 2010, it provides a fragrant and beautiful educational experience.⁴⁴ Here are familiar Indian plants like the sacred and Krishna tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum* and *tenuiflorum*) and caranda (*Carissa carandas*), whose fruit is used in pickle, as well as European herbs like rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and exotics like the calabash tree (*Crescentia cujete*) with its deep red flowers and swollen, gourd-like fruit. Among the creepers is long pepper (*Piper longum*), with turmeric and mustard, one of the earliest spices to be mentioned in ancient Indian texts.⁴⁵ A rare pleasure is to pick a fresh rudraksha pod (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) straight from the tree and break it open to see the seed contained within. Blossoming freely in the unpolluted air is the Sita Ashok (*Saraca asoca*) whose softly drooping leaves and clusters of long-stamened crimson and orange flowers were depicted in stone by Indian sculptors on the railings of the Bharhut Stupa in the second century BCE⁴⁶ (see box: The Herbal Garden of Rashtrapati Nilayan).



The circular road that runs past the Herbal Garden around the grounds leads past a great variety of mature trees, both indigenous and introduced. As the flame-of-the-forest flowers fall, tiny neem flowers scent the air. The calls and songs of grey hornbills, magpie robins, koels, coppersmiths, purple sunbirds, prinias, partridges and peacocks amiably punctuate the silence. Mottled wood owls stare down from high branches while, alarmed by human approach, lesser thick-knees crouch, perfectly camouflaged, to the earth. As evening falls a barn owl screeches from the tower of the Asafia Kothi that once belonged to the nizam.

There are still snakes, and it is a very dramatic sight to watch a lithe, muscular six-foot long ratsnake suddenly emerge from an innocent-looking pile of leaves. Ratsnakes, however, are not only harmless to humans but, as they consume rats, positively beneficial. The water-loving checkered keelback, the green vine snake and bronze-backed tree snake are three other common non-venomous Nilayam residents captured each year by a team of madari-wale, a traditional community of snake-charmers. The only venomous snake they regularly find at the Nilayam is the spectacled cobra,⁴⁷ but in 2015 they also found three young Russell's vipers. All the snakes caught are taken to Hyderabad's Nehru Zoological Park.⁴⁸

LEFT: The snake catching team remove a spectacled cobra from the Nilayam grounds

*ABOVE: The fragrant flowers of the cannonball tree (*Couroupita guianensis*) on of the many splendid trees in the Nilayam's grounds*



ABOVE RIGHT: An Indian grey hornbill, one of the many resident species at the Nilayam

ABOVE LEFT: An Indian golden oriole brings a burst of colour to the treetops

BELOW LEFT: A bronze-backed tree snake, one of the species most often found at the Nilayam

PRESIDENTS AND THEIR GUESTS

Around the bungalow itself are the lawns and nursery where potted plants are carefully tended by the malis of Rashtrapati Bhavan. Their task is to make a spectacular show of plants for the president and his guests. In November 1983 they prepared for royalty. That month, Queen Elizabeth II of England and her husband Prince Philip came to stay at the Nilayam on the occasion of their wedding anniversary. D. Ramanujan was one of the gardeners who created a beautiful display of potted plants at the entrance gates. He and his colleagues greeted the queen with a namaste, while to add a touch of pageantry, two mounted policemen and an elephant were put on duty to salute the royal couple each morning.⁴⁹

The queen was the guest of President Giani Zail Singh, the only president so far who was not comfortable speaking English and so always used an interpreter. Gregarious and outgoing, before becoming a politician his training had been as a Sikh preacher and part of that training included the study of Persian and the Qur'an. He took great delight in Urdu poetry and Hyderabad's characteristic Deccani Urdu, and held a mushaira at the Nilayam.⁵⁰

President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, a former member of the Constituent Assembly and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, was a son of the soil, and when he came to Hyderabad at the end of a long career, he was coming home. His village near Anantapur was some 400 kilometres away, but that distance proved no obstruction to old friends who came to call on him from there and from all over the state. Shortly after becoming president he was diagnosed with lung cancer but after treatment returned to his duties without complaint.⁵¹ The development of the state was naturally close to his heart and one of the tours he made from Bolarum was to the site of the Srisailem hydroelectric and irrigation project where a dam was being erected across a gorge in the Krishna River.⁵² The project, one of the largest in India, took over 20 years to build, finally being completed in 1984.

At Bolarum, President Reddy's wife ran his kitchen with the cook she had trained in his favourite Rayalseema food, that features raagi and meat dishes.⁵³ Different presidents favoured different cuisines, but all preferred simple fare except for special occasions. S. Radhakrishnan and R. Venkatraman's choice, for example, was South Indian vegetarian, while Zakir Husain's wife trained a Hyderabad cook to make her husband's favourite dish—a Bengali preparation made with chicken and cream.⁵⁴ Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed kept mostly to continental food, although he and his wife Begum Abida introduced to the household a specialist rice cook from Rampur who was master of 120 different rice dishes, including delicious ones cooked in the dum-pukht style.⁵⁵ To this day the Rashtrapati Bhavan cooks travel down to the Nilayam to prepare food for the president and his family. The president's kitchen is set up in an enclosed verandah, in a space not much bigger than the kitchen in an average middle-class home. In 2015, the head cook, Nafis Ali Baig, who had worked at the Rashtrapati Bhavan for more than 30 years and was a specialist in the nawabi cuisine of his home town Lucknow, busied himself creating President Mukherjee's favourite Bengali vegetarian dishes.

THE SOUTHERN SOJOURN

The Rashtrapati Bhavan cooks, including a baker and a halwai, form part of a 35-member team of household staff that sets off in advance of every visit to the Nilayam. Others in the team include butlers, room attendants, laundrymen and members of the 'Anti-Malaria Gang'. A single truck is dispatched packed with all the heavy luggage the household needs, from crockery and cutlery, to bed linen and fogging equipment for malaria control.⁵⁶ However, this is only one part of the preparations for a presidential visit. Participating in the planning process and working as one team are state officials and police, state protocol officers, different departments from the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and all agencies whose information and input helps to make the visit a success. Sixty individuals with different expertise take part in the advance coordination meeting and a total of 100 staff travel from Delhi to the Nilayam.



ABOVE: Head cook Nafis Ali Baig with some of the president's favourite vegetarian dishes he prepares in the small kitchen in an enclosed verandah of the Nilayam

ABOVE RIGHT: President Neelam Sanjiva Reddy acknowledging the enthusiastic welcome he was given when he visited the Srisaïlam dam project in 1977 [Source: Rashtrapati Bhavan Photo Section]

BELOW RIGHT: President Zail Singh with Queen Elizabeth II of Britain and her husband Prince Philip, who were his guests at the Nilayam [Source: Photo Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]





ABOVE: The president's presence brings ceremony to the Nilayam. Each morning the national flag is hoisted on the flagstaff on the roof, and each evening the last post is played, the flag is lowered and respectfully carried away

FACING PAGE: Every minute of the president's stay is carefully planned. Here the ADCs on duty in the East Wing discuss the day's arrangements with the comptroller of the president's household (left) and the camp commandant



With the arrival of the president, now always by air, the quiet Nilayam is transformed into a compact version of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, with senior staff including the military secretary, two ADCs, the comptroller of the household, the president's private secretary, press secretary, his personal security officers and physicians.

The tricolor now flies from the flagstaff on the Nilayam's roof. Tents are pitched near the main entrance gate for the camp commandant from the Telangana police, and, as laid down in protocol, fire engines and ambulances are kept on hand. Communications systems and CCTVs are all in place and two sniffer dogs make regular rounds on the lookout for explosives. The Nilayam's exteriors are decorated with banks of pot plants and lined with large, shining brass planters, marked with the Indian emblem, the Ashokan lions.

Technology has streamlined official work, and simple, practical living accommodation has now been provided on the edge of the estate for those who cannot be accommodated at the Nilayam. There, even the smaller heritage buildings on the estate are brought into use. One is turned into the dispensary, the former stableyard

becomes a car park and even the small syces' rooms, newly painted, become quarters for policemen and women and for the snake catching team.

From the earliest planning stage, every minute of the president's programme is coordinated by the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Tour Section. Chote Lal, the Tour Section head, has worked at Rashtrapati Bhavan for more than three decades. Over the years he has found that the word 'leisure' has completely disappeared from the presidential lexicon. He remembers travelling with President Abdul Kalam when he attended four engagements in one day, each in a different city. Presidents like R. Venkatraman and K.R. Narayanan never believed in taking time off, and he finds President Pranab Mukherjee very much in this mould.⁵⁷

It is, of course, entirely up to each president to decide to what extent he or she uses the retreats to relax and to what extent as an opportunity to engage with people. Pranab Mukherjee, even when writing his autobiography, allows himself very little private time. In July 2015, state boundaries had again been redrawn, this time creating the state of Telangana. A stream of politicians from both sides of the divide, and also the Chief Secretary of Andhra





FAR LEFT: The president allows himself very little private time even at his southern retreat, and begins work in the early morning

LEFT: The president meets one of the youngest guests at his at-home

FACING PAGE BELOW: Visitors are warmly welcomed with traditional hospitality that naturally includes tea and snacks. In the Nilayam's main kitchen the halwai makes fresh jalebis for the president's guests

Pradesh, made their way to the Nilayam with grievances over the way the division of state institutions was taking place. The president is a constitutional head of state, but he can also act as a listening post. On this occasion he gave them all a patient hearing and accepted petitions. These were then handed to his secretariat from where they were forwarded to the relevant authorities as necessary. His visitors had the satisfaction of highlighting their concerns.

The sojourn though has a wider purpose. It is intended as an opportunity to meet people from the whole of the south and from all walks of life. In July 2015, visitors included a delegation from Karnataka hoping for a new IIT in their area, and a group of differently-abled children, their parents and educators. Many of those who request the private secretary for an appointment come simply to pay their respects.

In earlier times, when security was less tight, meetings were held in true Hyderabadi style, with chairs, rugs and tables set out on the lawn. President Shankar Dayal Sharma's former ADC recalls that he rarely refused a request for an appointment and became so engrossed with his guests that

he had to be reminded to take his lunch.⁵⁸ Now meetings are held indoors, with larger groups, sometimes of 30 or more accommodated in the cinema room. Although the security is very strict, it is also low key.

All visitors are warmly welcomed with traditional Indian hospitality that naturally includes tea and snacks. These are prepared in the main kitchen building, which also houses the bakery. A typical menu consists of vada with fresh coconut chutney, paneer pakoras with a crispy crumb coating, and mouthwatering sweet mini-samosas covered with a sugar glaze and stuffed with dry fruit. Hot *jalebis*, everyone's favourite, is another of the *halwai's* specialities.

Formal dinners, notably with the state governor, are also a feature of each tour and as a climax a large reception or at-home is held in the late afternoon on the Nilayam's immaculate lawns. Invitees include state governors, chief justices and judges, chief ministers and ministers, now from both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, retired and serving senior army, navy and air force officers, civil servants and prominent citizens from fields such as culture, the arts, education and also the press.



A large number of men and women from the state and from the capital work together as one team to make each southern sojourn a success. Pictured here are many, but by no means all, of those involved in the visit of July 2015

Over the years a stay at the Nilayam has also enabled presidents to visit the many local centres of excellence such as the city's universities, the Administrative Staff College housed in the pristine Belle Vista palace, and the Air Force Academy that trains pilots and ground staff of the armed forces. There have also been opportunities to engage with business leaders and visit scientific institutions and public undertakings such as the Avionics Division of Hindustan Aeronautics that since 1965 has developed and made in India electronic systems for defence aircraft. Presidents have also actively involved themselves in events celebrating the arts and the Telugu language, and have taken the opportunity to visit the temple of Lord Venkateshwara at Tirupati.

Of course modern India has changed greatly since the first presidents set the example of spending a month at a time at the Nilayam. As the years passed, duties in Delhi, for example during a prolonged period of minority government and unstable coalitions, as well as duties in other parts of India and abroad, led to visits being shortened. President Kalam's visits can be measured in hours rather than days as he criss-crossed the nation. However, he was not typical and most presidents, especially the current one, Pranab Mukherjee, have placed great importance on a southern sojourn and have found that the Nilayam proves an effective base for their commitments in the south.

Recently the concept of public outreach has been introduced to the Nilayam as it has been to the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The estate has begun to open its gates to the public

for some time each winter, often immediately after the president's December visit. School children enjoy walks around the property and learning about medicinal plants in the herb garden. In 2015, President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated a new *nakshatra*, or astrological, garden, as an added attraction, with trees and shrubs appropriate for each sign of the zodiac and the 27 lunar mansions.

President Pranab Mukherjee has encouraged these developments that form part of his aims for his retreats. As he says,

'Both The Retreat at Mashobra and the Nilayam are important heritage properties and a valuable part of the President's Estate. They are indicative of the role of the President of India in the integration of our country. . . . My effort since assuming office has been to restore and refurbish these Retreats, use them to the best extent possible and to open them out to the public wherever feasible.'⁵⁹

In the course of this volume, we have travelled from Bengal to the Himalaya and to the Deccan and considered the evolution of two institutions, the hill station and the cantonment and, in particular, the cantonments of Secunderabad and Bolarum. But at the heart of the book stand The Retreat at Mashobra and the Rashtrapati Nilayam, two very evocative and beautiful homes of the President of India that are now revealed as part of our shared national heritage to be treasured for future generations.



A view of the new Nakshatra Garden

Notes

1. *Deccan Chronicle*, 24 June 1956.
2. Tour programme of President Rajendra Prasad, 29 August 1951, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
3. *Deccan Chronicle*, 20 December 1949.
4. Lord Hardinge was the last viceroy to stay at the Hyderabad Residency when he visited in 1911. On his 1913 visit he stayed at Falaknuma, as did subsequently Lord Chelmsford, Lord Irwin, the Earl of Willingdon, the Marquess Linlithgow, and Field Marshal Viscount Wavell (British Library India Office Records IOR/R/2/87/298 of 1911, IOR/R/2/87/299 of 1913, IOR/R/2/87/300 of 1919, IO/R/2/87/302 of 1929, IOR/R/2/87/303 of 1933, IOR/R/2/87/304 of 1938, IOR/2/2/88/305 of 1944). Princes of Wales stayed at Falaknuma during tours in 1905–06 and 1922 (British Library India Office Records IOR/R/R/88/306 and C file no. 102 of 1922, Hyderabad Residency files, British Library).
5. Ramchandra Guha, *India After Gandhi* (Delhi: Picador, 2007), 52.
6. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 8, 102–04 and 106–09, quoted in A.G. Noorani, *The Destruction of Hyderabad* (Delhi: Tulika Books, 2013), 227–30.
7. *Deccan Chronicle*, 20 December 1949 and *New Era*, 20 December 1949.
8. General J.N. Chaudhuri, *An Autobiography* as narrated to B.K. Narayan (Delhi: Vikas, 1978), 159.
9. Interview with Indira Devi Dhanrajgir, 4 April 2015.
10. *The Hyderabad Bulletin*, 20 and 21 December 1949, *The Hindu*, 23 December 1949. Cuttings filed with the Rajaji Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi.
11. <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/when-the-nizam-turned-poet-on-republic-day-in-1950/article2833385> *The Hindu*, 26 January 2012 'When the Nizam Turned Poet on Republic Day 1950'.
12. Valmiki Chaudhuri, *Rashtrapati-Bhavan Ki Dairi*, Bhag 1 (New Delhi: Atma Ram and Sons, January 1950–April 1952), 287.
13. Interview with Commander Rajan Vir, New Delhi 2014.
14. Tour programme of President Rajendra Prasad, 29 August 1951.
15. Dr Rajendra Prasad, *Correspondence and Select Documents*, ed. Valmiki Chaudhury, vol. 14, letter no. 271, vol. 21 letter no. 97 (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1987).
16. Photographs of the Nizam at Rashtrapati Nilayam, Photo Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
17. Interview with Lakshmi Devi Raj, Hyderabad, April 2015.
18. Interview with Khaja Ahmedullah, Hyderabad, April 2015.
19. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal*, vol. I (London: W.H. Allen, 1887), 196, 203–05.
20. Residents were involved with the minutiae of royal and viceregal visits down to the provision of a special room for brushing clothes even when on shikar. Sometimes their advice was ignored. In 1938 the resident had warned the Viceroy Linlithgow's office that if he insisted on a shoot near Hyderabad he would end up walking through heavy mud for only duck and snipe. He did insist and the result was officially referred to as 'a troublesome episode'. The nizam banned shooting at a lake on his personal lands months in advance of the visit causing such resentment that a party of young *jagirdars* made a point to poach the birds just a few days before the viceroy arrived. India Office Records IOR/R/R/88/306, IOR/R/2/87/304, British Library.
21. Protocol was another area that could give residents nightmares. In 1922, the Prince of Wales' staff were greatly miffed by what they considered protocol gaffes by the nizam, notably allowing the prince to get lost in the Chowmahalla Palace on his way to a banquet. The resident's attempts to reprimand the Raj's 'most loyal ally' did not go down well. The nizam responded, not without sarcasm, that 'the Government of India's rules and regulations regarding ceremonials are so extraordinary that their subtle



points are quite inscrutable to the ordinary human being'. C. File no. 102 of 1922, Hyderabad Residency Files, British Library.

22. Report by J.G. Cordery, Resident of Hyderabad to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated 11 March 1884, 'Investiture of the Nizam of Hyderabad'. File nos. 4–22, Foreign Department, Secret Files, National Archives.
23. Rana Chhina, *India and the First World War 1914–18* (Delhi: Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research, 2014), 4, 141.
24. Presentation of British and Indian Officers held at 9.45 am, 30 November 1933. India Office Records, IOR/R/2/87/303, British Library.
25. Rajendra Prasad, *Correspondence and...*, Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 31 July 1957.
26. *Ibid.*, Letter to Jagjivan Ram, 20 August 1959.
27. *Deccan Chronicle*, 1 July 1956.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Deccan Chronicle*, 3 July 1956.
30. *Deccan Chronicle*, 8 July 1956.
31. Tour Programme of Dr Rajendra Prasad to Bolarum, 16 August 1959, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
32. 'Supreme Commander Visits EME and AOC Centres in Hyderabad', *Deccan Chronicle*, 7 July 1956.
33. Tour Programme of Dr Rajendra Prasad, 15 August 1959, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
34. Sarvepalli Gopal, *Radhakrishnan: A Biography* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989), 310.
35. Interview with Prabhjot Kaur, NOIDA, 2 March 2014.
36. Interview with Prabhjot Kaur's daughter Nirupama, NOIDA, 2 March 2014.
37. 'Works at Hyderabad', Letter from R.L. Vahi, Executive Engineer to Deputy Military Secretary to the President dated 5 April 1972, Rashtrapati Bhavan Record Room.
38. Interview with Rajiv Tiwari, 8 July 2015 and website projecteur.cinema.pagesperso-orange.fr accessed 8 July 2015.
39. Interview with Prabhjot Kaur, 2 March 2014.
40. Interview with Nilofer Menon, New Delhi, April 2015.
41. Interview with Lieutenant-Colonel R.V.M. Menon, New Delhi, April 2015.
42. Interview with Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed, New Delhi, 9 April 2015.
43. Lady Irwin played golf on 16 December 1929 while her husband played tennis at the Hyderabad Residency, and then played another round on 19 December. India Office Records IOR/R/2/87/302.
44. Viscount Wavell played on the afternoon on 10 December 1944. India Office Records IOR/R/2/87/305.
45. Interview with Justice Ahmed, 9 April 2015.
46. Interviews with Nilayam gardeners D. Ramanujan and Satya Narayan, beldar R.C. Shekhar and gardening contractor Amjad Ali, Rashtrapati Nilayam, April 2015.
47. Herbal Garden, Rashtrapati Nilayam (Hyderabad: AP Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Board, 2010).
48. K.T. Achaya, *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37.
49. T.K. Biswas and P.K. Deb Nath, 'Asoka (*Saraca indica*)—A Cultural and Scientific Evaluation', Bharat Kala Bhawan and Department of Pharmacology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, received 27 September 1972.
50. Interview with Avinash Viswanathan, General Secretary, Friends of Snakes Society, 13 April, 2015.
51. Interviews with Sheikh Maulana, Syed Maulana, M.D. Anwar, Syed Karim and Syed Chand, snake catching team, 6 July 2015.
52. Interview with D. Ramanujan and R.C. Shekhar, April 2015.
53. Interview with Tarlochan Singh, New Delhi, 29 January 2015.
54. Interview with Zahid Ali Khan, editor *Siyasat*, Hyderabad, April 2015.
55. Interview with D.V. Prasad, New Delhi, 5 March 2015.
56. Tour Programme for President N. Sanjiva Reddy, 26 and 27 October 1977, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
57. Interview with D.V. Prasad, 5 March 2015.
58. Interview with Nilofer Menon, April 2015.
59. Interview with Justice Ahmed, 9 April 2015.
60. Interview with Captain Prashant Singh, Comptroller of the President's Household, 21 April 2015.
61. Interview with Chote Lal, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan, 23 March 2015.
62. Interview with Colonel V.S. Chauhan, New Delhi, 11 February 2015.
63. Written replies by President Pranab Mukherjee to questions for this volume, June 2015.



THE HERBAL GARDEN OF RASHTRAPATI NILAYAM

The Herbal Garden at Rashtrapati Nilayam contains over a hundred different kinds of medicinal plants, including many trees. This selection of some of those at their best in July 2015 shows their diversity and indicates some of their many medicinal uses. The information is provided by the National Medicinal Plants Board and the Telangana and AP Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Boards.



Adansonia digitata, Baobab tree
Uses: Dysentery, respiratory disorders



Aloe vera, Kalabanda
Uses: Bronchitis, asthma, jaundice



Argyreia nervosa, Samudrapala
Uses: Chronic ulcers, eczema, diuretic



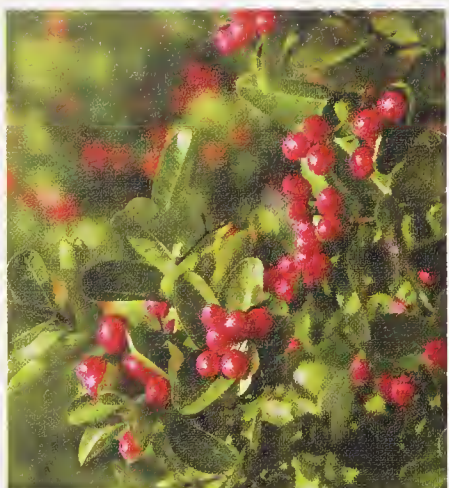
Asparagus racemosa, Satavari
Uses: Urinary diseases,
gynaecological disorders,
hypertension



Basella rubra, Erra bachali
Uses: Emollient, laxative, haemostatic,
sedative, appetiser, diuretic



Calophyllum inophyllum, Ponna chettu
Uses: Rheumatism, scabies,
syphilis, toothache



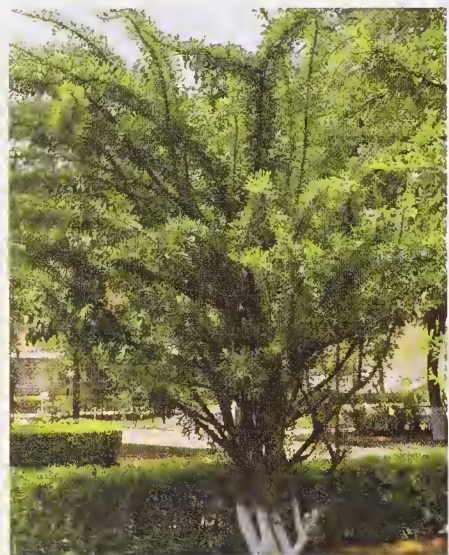
Carissa carandas, Wakkayalu
Uses: Anthelmintic, fevers



Cassia fistula, Rela, Amaltas
Uses: Skin diseases, cardiac diseases, jaundice, promotes digestion



Cissus quadrangulis, Nalleru
Uses: Bone fracture, dyspepsia, general weakness



Crescentia cujete, Calabash tree
Uses: Fever, skin disease, hypertension



Curcuma aromatica, Kasturi or wild turmeric. Uses: Skin eruptions, bronchitis, sprains



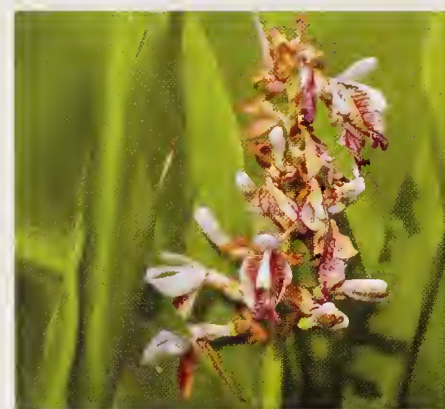
Cymbopogon winterianus, Java citronella
Uses: Deodarant, mosquito repellent creams



Dillenia indica, Pedda kalinga or elephant apple. Uses: Laxative, astringent, fever, anti-inflammatory



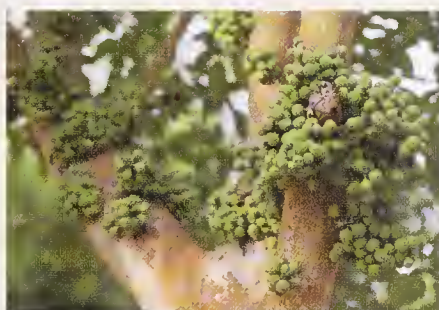
Elaeocarpus ganitrus, Rudraksha
Uses: Convulsions, insomnia, jaundice



Elattaria cardamomum, Yalakulu or cardamom
Uses: Dysentery, depression, scanty urination



Ficus carica, Anjura pandu or fig
Uses: Laxative, emollient, diuretic



Ficus racemosa, Medi
Uses: Diarrhoea, leucoderma, diabetes



Indigofera tinctoria, Neeli or true indigo
Uses: Liver, lung and kidney disorders, whooping cough



Morinda citrifolia, Togara noni
Uses: Gout, wounds, ulcers, delirium, debility



Notonia grandiflora, Kundela chevi
Uses: Anti-bacterial activity, ear infections, pimples



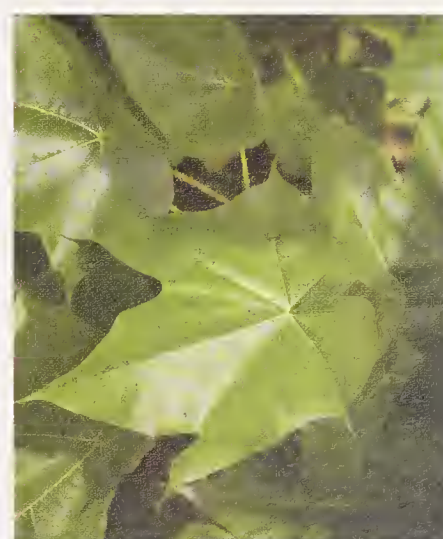
Passiflora edulis, Passion fruit
Uses: Pain, anxiety, hypertension



Rauwolfia serpentina, Sarpagandha
Uses: Hypertension, epilepsy, eczema



Rosmarinus officinalis, Rosemary
Uses: Digestive, kidney tonic



Sterculia urens, Tapasi
Uses: Aids parturition, source of vitamin A

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LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews with Chait Ram and Munshi Ram conducted in May and August 2014

Interview with Lady Pamela Hicks, 11 May 2014

Interview with Anirudh Singh, 15 May 2014

Interview with Rear Admiral Kirpal Singh, 15 August 2014

Interview with Tara Gandhi-Bhattacharya, 23 August 2014

Interview with Sunita Sharma, wife of Ashok Kumar, 17 November 2014

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Interview with Mark Tully, 1 December 2014

Interview with Karamat Muffakham Jah, 6 January 2015

Interview with Dr Mohini Giri, 29 January 2015

Interview with Tarlochan Singh, New Delhi, 29 January 2015

Interview with Colonel V.S. Chauhan, New Delhi, 11 February 2015

Interview with Lakshmi Venkatraman, 25 February 2015

Interview with D.V. Prasad, New Delhi, 5 March 2015

Interview with Chhote Lal, Tour Section, Rashtrapati Bhavan, 23 March 2015

Interview with Dr Aminuddin Khan, administrator of the nizam's private estates, Hyderabad, 23 March 2015

Interview with Prabhjot Kaur and her daughter Nirupama, 2 March 2014

Interview with Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed, New Delhi, 9 April 2015

Interview with Captain Prashant Singh, comptroller of the president's household, 21 April 2015

Interview with Zahid Ali Khan, editor 'Siyasat', Hyderabad, April 2015

Interviews with Indira Dhanrajgir and Bilquees Latif, 4 April 2015

Interview with Commodore Rajan Vir, New Delhi, 26 August 2014

Interview with Lakshmi Devi Raj, Hyderabad, April 2015

Interview with Khaja Ahmedullah, Hyderabad, April 2015

Interview with Rajiv Tiwari, Bolarum, 8 July 2015

Interview with Nilofer Menon, New Delhi, April 2015

Interview with Lieutenant Colonel R.V.M. Menon, New Delhi, April 2015

Interviews with Nilayam gardeners D. Ramanujan, and Satya Narayan, beldar R.C. Shekhar, and gardening contractor Anjad Ali, Bolarum April 2015

Interview with Avinash Viswanathan, General Secretary, Friends of Snakes Society 13 April 2015

Interviews with Sheikh Maulana, Syed Maulana, M.D. Anwar, Syed Karim and Syed Chand, snake catching team, Bolarum, 6 July 2015

FRONT COVER: The Retreat at Mashobra, near Shimla, in midwinter

BACK COVER: Rashtrapati Nilayam, the southern Retreat of the President of India at Bolarum, Secunderabad



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